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Bahrul Uloom Maulana Obeidullah el-Obeidi Suhrawardy, be
known by his poetical sobriquet Obeidi, Sufi, linguist, scholar
author, one of the original Directors of the Mohammedan An
Oriental College of Aligarh, Founder and First Principal of Da
Madrassah, a pioneer of Anglo-Islamic studies and female educat
and a collaborator of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Born 6 *Jamādā II* 1250 (11 *October* 1834) — Died 19 *Rabīʿ II* 1302 (6 *February* 1885)

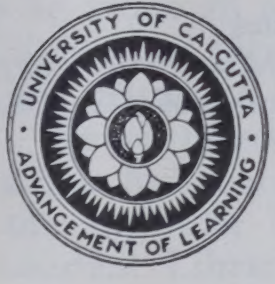
(*Portrait taken at the age of 32*)

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF ṢŪFISM

The Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy Lectures for 1942

BY

ARTHUR J. ARBERRY, LITT.D.



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INTRODUCTION

IT is with great pleasure that I write a few words of introduction to Dr. Arberry's Lectures, which form a history of the progress of Ṣūfī studies in Europe since the end of the eighteenth century and lay down a programme for future work.

The Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy Lectureship at the University of Calcutta was founded by me in honour of the memory of my brother, and in order to stimulate research into Islamic thought and culture.

It is particularly gratifying to me that the first person to hold this Lectureship should be a man who is not only an eminent Islamic scholar, but also a personal friend of mine. Dr. Arthur J. Arberry has had a distinguished career in the academic world and has established himself as one of the leading authorities in Europe on Islam and Islamic culture. At the University of Cambridge he broke all records by taking four first classes in Classics and Oriental Languages, and later by attaining the degree of Doctor of Letters at the early age of 31. He has travelled widely in the Middle East and for a time had charge of the Department of Classics in the Egyptian University: since 1934 he has been Assistant Librarian at the India Office, in which capacity he is a successor to Sir Thomas Arnold and Professor C. A. Storey. At the beginning of the present war he was transferred to undertake work of great national importance in which his expert knowledge of Arabic and Persian has had full scope. It was at the cost of great personal effort that he consented to write these Lectures, at a time when his energies are fully extended in patriotic work connected directly with the war, and I was therefore all the more

pleased that he has been able to accede to my request and become Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy Lecturer for 1942. Dr. Arberry's publications on Islamic culture in general and on Ṣūfism in particular already run into many thousands of pages and upwards of a dozen books, and one can confidently predict for him a career in which he will prove himself a worthy successor to Professor E. G. Browne, of whose College he is a former Fellow, and to his teacher Professor R. A. Nicholson. In this connexion I should like to quote from a letter which Professor Nicholson wrote after reading the manuscript of these Lectures.

'I have read and re-read your three Lectures, and the word that sums up my opinion of them is "masterly". Your grasp of the subject both as a whole and in detail astonishes even me who know you to be—what Voltaire called Habakkuk, though in a very different sense—capable de tout; and you have treated it in a most interesting and illuminating way. You disclaim originality, but these Lectures are certainly original and constructive. The historical part gives much information that is new to me. Lecture II on the modern school is one of the finest examples of appreciative criticism I have ever seen. . . . These Lectures with the programme laid down in them will inspire enthusiasm and lead, I hope, to results of the highest value.'

As regards my brother Abdullàh, who died in Calcutta on 13 January 1935, besides being a profound scholar of Islam, he rendered countless other services to the Muslim cause. I do not think I can do better, in describing his brilliant career, than quote the obituary notice which was printed in *The Times* of 14 January 1935.

'He brought to bear upon his work, as a leader of the Bengal Moslems, intense devotion and profound Islamic scholarship. . . . He won great influence with his people and general respect by the variety of his services to his community and to his province.

He was the son of Bahrul Uloom Hazrat Maulana Obeidullah-el-Obeidi Suhrawardy, a pioneer of Anglo-Islamic studies and of female education in Bengal. He was educated at Dacca Madrasa and then at the Government College in that town. Thence he came to University College, London, and continued his education in France, Germany, and Austria and at Constantinople and Cairo, and won the degree of D.Ph., and high honours in Arabic and Persian. In this country, when studying for the Bar at Gray's Inn in 1909, he assisted in the movement for providing a great mosque in London. Deeply impressed by his contact with the Moslems of the Near East he founded and was the first Secretary of the Pan-Islamic Society. He took some part in the expression of Indian Moslem opinion in this country on the Morley-Minto Reforms; and on returning to Calcutta to practise at the Bar he was elected to the reformed Bengal Legislature. When the further advances associated with the names of Mr. Edwin Montagu and Lord Chelmsford were under consideration, Suhrawardy was selected to be a Member of the Reforms Franchise Committee which toured in India under the chairmanship of Lord Southborough. He continued to serve on the enlarged Bengal Legislature and was Deputy President from 1923 to 1926. He was then elected to the Indian Legislative Assembly, of which he continued a Member to the end. . . . He was for many years Secretary of the Indian Moslem Association of Bengal, and in 1920 succeeded the late Sir Muhammad Shafi as Secretary of the All-India Moslem Association. . . . Many papers and books came from his busy pen. *The Moslem Law of Marriage and of Inheritance*, *A History of Moslem Legal Institutions*, and *Outlines of the Historical Development of Muslim Law*, were among his best-known works; and he also wrote historical studies and novels of Moslem life. Tagore Law Lecturer in 1911, he did an immense amount of important educational work, and also took a share in Local Self-Government activities and was the first non-official Chairman of Midnapore District Board. . . . His restless spirit was always yearning for fresh fields of effort; and his physical powers, sapped as they were by frequent fevers, were not equal to the strain of his emotional temperament and constant mental activities.'

The obituary notice gives many details of his life and work, but it does not mention the little book *The Sayings of Muhammad* (first published in February 1905),[1] which was of all his works nearest his heart. There is also no reference to the fact that Abdullah was an extraordinarily brilliant student, winning stipends and scholarships throughout his school and college career. He graduated with honours in Arabic, English, and Philosophy, obtaining first class in his special subjects and standing first of his year both in the B.A. and M.A. examinations of Calcutta University. He was also the first to obtain the Ph.D. degree of that University. While studying for the Bar, he took his M.A. degree from the London University and used to add to his slender allowance from India by lecturing on Arabic letters and jurisprudence, subjects to which he contributed in his later life and teachings much of value and freshness.

It seems appropriate here to mention something about the Mystic Saints of the religious orders of Islam, also to touch briefly on some of the activities of the *Khāndān-i-Suhrawardīyah*, the fraternity of the *darwīsh* order of Suhrawardī, from which Abdullah Suhrawardy claimed descent.

From Iraq, Turkestan, Iran, and Afghanistan came missionaries belonging to various orders of Ṣūfism. They brought with them the fervour, devotion, and piety resulting from long discipline, discipleship with the spiritual leaders in those lands, and experience gained in travels and pilgrimages to shrines and holy places of Islam. The Muslim missionaries were prompted by a desire to serve God, they had no central organization like missionary endowments of Christian churches, nor had they any State backing. Muslim

[1] Published with a foreword by Mahatma Gandhi in 'The Wisdom of the East' series by John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, W. 1.

sovereignty must nevertheless have ensured protection and prestige to the missionaries of their faith, as some of the kings followed the Christian practice of styling themselves 'King Defender of the Faith'. The successes of the Muslim missionaries, however, were of an entirely individualistic character based on their personality and piety, and they carried on their work by peaceful means, following the wake of traders and merchant princes on the routes by sea and by land from west to east and north to south, and penetrating into regions where Muslim rule did not exist at all.

They preached the straightforward religious and social precepts of Islam which, with supreme grandeur, exalted the unity of God against the prevailing idolatrous and polytheistic practices to which the high philosophic monotheism of the Hindus had degenerated. They proclaimed and practised the equality of all believers of the faith, and embraced in the very centre of the social structure of their society the new Muslim converts even from the non-caste Hindus, so long despised and condemned by their proud Brahmin and Kshatrya rulers.

The Muslim Ṣūfīs made many concessions to Hindu beliefs and customs in their early converts. The Muslims showed great honour to new converts; there was no prejudice against intermarriage nor any colour bar. Goodness was the only criterion of worth. The Arab, Turki, Irani, and other saints and missionaries gave titles of respect to Indian Muslims who embraced Islam, such as Shaykh, Malik, Khalīfa, Mu'min, &c.

The Muslim missionaries won conspicuous success, and Islamic Ṣūfism with its cognate mystical yearnings after Union with God received a most hospitable home on Indian soil. In the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* Abū 'l-Faḍl mentions fourteen orders common in his time.[1] To-day, more than

[1] Chishtīyah, Suhrawardīyah, Ḥabībiyah, Ṭafyūrīyah, Karkhīyah,

two-thirds of India's Muslim population are under the influence of some one or other of the *darwīsh* orders or fraternities, the principal ones being the *Chishtīyah* and *Suhrawardīyah*, the *Qādirīyah* and *Naqshbandīyah*.

The spiritual guide known as *shaykh* in Islamic countries is commonly known as *murshid* or *pīr* in India. The disciple is called a *murīd*, and the practice of Ṣūfism as a *darwīsh* order is known as *pīri-murīdī*, and is a counterpart of the *guru-chela* relationship among the Hindus.

The Province of Sind claims the distinction of being the home of Indian Ṣūfism. According to Khwājah Ḥasan Niẓāmī, the Suhrawardī Ṣūfīs were the first to arrive in India and made their head-quarters in Sind. This must have followed many centuries after the Arab conquest in A.D. 711 because it is well known that the Suhrawardīyah order attained great influence in India under the leadership of the learned divine Bahā al-Ḥaqq Bahā al-Dīn Zakarīya of Multan (1170–1267). While returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, he visited Baghdad and became a favourite disciple of Shaykh al-Shuyūkh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, the founder of the order (1144–1235).[1]

On the death of Bahā al-Ḥaqq in 1267, he was succeeded by his son-in-law, the mystic poet 'Irāqī, who had been his disciple for over twenty-five years; later, disgusted with the petty jealousy and narrow-minded bigotry of the people around him, 'Irāqī left his son Kabīr al-Dīn at Multan, bade farewell to India, and

Saqaṭīyah, Junaydīyah, Kāzarūnīyah, Ṭūsīyah, Firdawsīyah, Zaydīyah, 'Iyāḍīyah, Adhamīyah, Hubayrīyah.

[1] Instead of the usual dome or cupola, Suhrawardi's tomb is surmounted by a large, peculiar pineapple-shaped structure. It stands near Wastanigate, once a busy centre of life but now an area of waste land and graveyard.

proceeded on a pilgrimage to Mecca. In Oman, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt he was received with great honour by the sultans and the learned people; he finally died at Damascus (1289), mourned equally by the Malik al-Umarā and the general public, and was buried in Ṣāliḥīya Cemetery.

The spiritual descendants and disciples of the Suhrawardī order have produced some of the greatest literary men in the world of Islam. In India the missionaries of this Order did conspicuous pioneer work in the spiritual and educational spheres. They won the allegiance of multitudes as well as of many influential chiefs. Indeed, many of them became the guides, not only in spiritual but in temporal matters, of the ruling Princes of the Turki, Pathan, and Sayyid dynasties. One of them, Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Surkh-pōsh (1199–1291), who was born in Bukhara and settled in Uch, carried extensive spiritual influence throughout Sind, Gujarat, and the Punjab. His *khalīfa* was his grandson, Jalāl ibn Aḥmad Kabīr, commonly known as Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān (d. 1384), who is said to have made the pilgrimage to Mecca thirty-six times and to have performed innumerable miracles. One of Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān's grandsons, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh, known as Burhān al-Dīn Quṭb-i ʿĀlam (d. 1453), went to Gujarat, where his tomb is still a place of pilgrimage at Batuwa. His son, Sayyid Muḥammad Shāh ʿĀlam (d. 1475), became still more famous; his tomb is at Rasulabad, near Ahmadabad.

In Behar and Bengal the existence of definite missionary efforts by the order of Suhrawardī Ṣūfism can be found in the old records and inscriptions on the tombs and shrines at Bihar, Manair, Phulwari, Gaur, and Panduah. One of the celebrities was Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī (d. 1244): he was a pupil of the saint Shihāb

al-Dīn Suhrawardī. One of his spiritual descendants converted to Islam the son of Raja Kans (Ganesh) of Bengal named Jatmall, commonly known as Jādū Jalāl al-Dīn; this king's tomb, under a very great cupola, can be seen on the way from the English Bazaar, Malda, to the Adina Mosque in Panduah, where the Bara Dargah (the chief shrine), erected in honour of a saint of the Suhrawardī *Khāndān* dynasty, still has rich endowments attached to it; on the tomb stones of the twelfth-century cemetery are found many of the names common amongst the present Suhrawardī family of Bengal. The present ruling family of Hyderabad and many of the Paigah nobilities are the spiritual descendants of the great mystic saints of Islam of the Suhrawardī order.

The following story of the conversion of the community known as Dudekulas in Southern India is given by T. W. Arnold, who refers to Bābā Fakhr al-Dīn, a Ṣūfī saint and missionary of the Suhrawardī and Qādirī orders, whose tomb lies at Penukonda, nearly ninety miles north of Bangalore. The legend says that he was originally a king of Sistan, who abdicated his throne in favour of his brother, became a religious mendicant, and set out on a proselytizing mission. He finally settled at Penukonda in the vicinity of a Hindu temple, where his presence was unwelcome to the Raja of the place. Instead of appealing to force, he applied several tests to discover whether the Muḥammadan saint or his own priest was the better qualified by sanctity to possess the temple. As a final test he had them both tied up in sacks filled with lime, and thrown into tanks. The Hindu priest never reappeared, but Bābā Fakhr al-Dīn asserted the superiority of his faith by being miraculously transported to a hill outside the town. The Raja thereupon became a Muslim, and his example was followed by a large number of the inhabitants of the

neighbourhood, and the temple was converted into a mosque. In the thirteenth century in the Deccan and Western India the celebrated Sayyid Muḥammad Gīsū-darāz won a number of converts and disciples. Pīr Mahābir Khāndāyat did successful missionary work in the kingdom of Bijapur in the early fourteenth century.

The *darwīsh* fraternity in India which embraces the largest number of followers, and is the oldest of the orders to have entered India, is the Chishtī order, which traces its origin to Khwājah Abū ʿAbd Allāh Chishtī (d. 966). It was introduced into India in 1192 by Khwājah Muʿīn al-Dīn Chishtī of Sistan (1142–1236). At Khurasan, Nishapur, Meshed, and other places he served his apprenticeship as a disciple of noted saints and became a special pupil of Khwājah ʿUthmān Chishtī Hārūnī. During his pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and his travels through Iraq he came under the influence of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī and Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī. 'The last of the great figures of the past, the last of the great masters who helped to make the name of Baghdad known throughout the world, Abdul Qadir and his contemporary Omar Suhrawardi (the latter of whom devoted himself mainly to literary labours) have a special interest.'[1] In 1192 Khwājah Muʿīn al-Dīn Chishtī came to India with the army of Shihāb al-Dīn Ghūṛī and went to Ajmir in 1195, which became his permanent residence until his death in 1236 at the age of 93. His tomb is the famous *dargāh* of Khwājah Ṣāḥib at Ajmir. Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā (1238–1325) is a famous spiritual descendant of Khwājah Ṣāḥib; the locality in the suburbs of Delhi where his tomb stands is known as Niẓām al-Dīn. Khwājah Ḥasan Niẓāmī is the best known among the living scions of his family. The Chishtī fraternity

[1] R. Cooke, *Baghdad the City of Peace*, p. 127.

spread far and wide throughout India, and won remarkable favour with the Mughal emperors, just as the Suhrawardī order had with the earlier ruling dynasties. It was Shaykh Sālim Chishtī whose prayers gave a son and heir to Akbar, and the prince was named Sālim after his godfather. The beautiful buildings at Fatehpur Sikri (Agra) with the mother-of-pearl walls, doors, and enclosures around the sepulchre are a symbol of the affection of his royal disciples.

The famous Qādirī order, founded by Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī of Baghdad (1078–1166), entered India through Sind in 1482. Sayyid Bandagī Muḥammad Ghawth, one of the descendants of the founder, took up his residence in Sind, at Uch, already made famous in the annals of Muslim saints by the Suhrawardī order. He died in 1517 in Uch, but through a long line of descendants, some of whom were saints and credited with miracles, had a most remarkable spiritual success throughout India. Shāh Muḥammad Ghawth has been canonized as a patron saint of Kashmir, and throughout Northern India. This order enjoys great prestige on account of the powerful personality, learning, eloquence, and piety of the founder. Innumerable miracles (*karāmāt*) are attributed to him and the honorific titles of al-Ghauth al-'Aẓam, Pīr-i Pīrān, Pīr-i Dastgīr, Baṛe Pīr, are used for him. The great mosque and the dome on his tomb form the most attractive features of the Bāb al-Shaykh, a locality so named after him in Baghdad. Very rich endowments are attached to the shrine. 'Shaykh Abdul Qadir Gilani was undoubtedly mainly responsible for the popularisation of the new note of passion and emotion in orthodox Islam, which had been introduced into more intellectual circles by Ghazali.'[1]

The Naqshbandī order, last of the great religious

[1] R. Cooke, *Baghdad the City of Peace*, p. 126.

orders to be introduced into India, was founded by Khwājah Bahā al-Dīn Naqshband of Turkestan, who died in 1389 and was buried near Bukhara. Khwājah Muḥammad Bāqī billāh Berang, who died in 1603 and is buried at Delhi, seems to have introduced this order into India. According to T. W. Arnold, however, it was introduced into India by Shaykh Aḥmad Fārūqī Sirhindī (Patiala State) who died in 1625. He is known as the *Mujaddid-i Alf-i Thānī*, a term which indicates that he was considered to be a reformer at the beginning of the second thousand years after the Prophet. This order does not seem to have been as much favoured with success as the earlier ones. Perhaps this is due to the fact that it appealed to the intellectuals and also came to India about four centuries after the appearance of the Chishtīs. In recent times there has been a Naqshbandī revival in the Punjab and Kashmir.

In passing I may mention that apart from the personal loyalty either to the founders of the order or to the saint or Ṣūfī under whose personal influence a disciple works, the organization of the different fraternities or orders of Ṣūfism mentioned above are much the same in general principles. Under the guidance of the Preceptor certain set rules have to be observed in the ritualistic practice of repetition of remembrances of the attributes of Almighty God. For instance, the words of the repetition are first pronounced audibly, in order that the faculty of hearing may assist concentration. From this, the disciple progresses to practising the repetitions in a whisper audible only to himself: then in an even later stage, he repeats them mentally with his eyes shut and his whole attention fixed on his devotions. All worldly thoughts are banished, the mind is fixed on thoughts of God above. Membership of one fraternity does not debar from joining another. A Muslim may

adopt the teachings and practices of different orders without losing his original standing in his fraternity. Khwājah Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, whose shrine in Qutb Minar at Delhi is the object of universal veneration, belonged to the Suhrawardī order, received spiritual gifts from Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir, and then became one of the most distinguished *Khalīfas* of Khwājah Muʿīn al-Dīn Chishtī. The special practices and directions which the founders enjoined on their followers are the only distinctive features. For instance, the rule of the Suhrawardī order is that the devotee should occupy himself mainly with the recitation of the Qur'ān and expounding of Ḥadīth (Traditions of the Prophet); the members of the fraternity who took a narrow view of things viewed with disapproval music and dancing accompanying the recitation of hymns and songs of praise, which are widely practised by Qalandars, and generally sanctioned by the Chishtī and Qādirī orders. The popularization of this note of appeal to the human sense has remarkable results and the rationalistic Muslims of to-day do not take any exception to these. It seems to me that this must have been a cause of winning favour with the multitude by appealing to the Indian minds with their Aryan emotion. Nothing has conduced more towards Hindu-Muslim *rapprochement* than such performances which are nearest the Hindu *Kirtan* devotional songs with music. The background of the pantheistic doctrines of Hinduism, the deep religious fervour underlying the Hindu mind, make the Hindu respect the piety and personality of Muslim Ṣūfis, and seek spiritual help from pious persons irrespective of their denomination. Hindus pay their devotions at the shrines of Muslim martyrs and saints, and offer vows and sometimes endow rich property for the maintenance of Muslim spiritual foundations.

Any Muslim can adopt any of the systems of the orders of mysticism, and is entitled to use the distinguishing terminology, Qādirī, Chishtī, Suhrawardī, Naqshbandī. He need not be a descendant by birth, but as the founders of the principal orders were either descendants of the Prophet or of one of his immediate successors and kinsmen, the Brahmanic tendency of giving priority to holders of such titles and claiming descent to be a criterion of status is one of the regrettable abuses in Muslim India with its Hindu environment. Muḥammad did not base the truth of his mission on the performance of any miracle. Indeed, when pressed to show a miracle he would say, 'There did not come to those before you an apostle but they called him an enchanter or a madman (*Qur.* li. 52). Glory be to my Lord: am I aught but a mortal apostle? (*Qur.* xvii. 93).' Zealous followers have attributed many miracles to him, and indeed to the saints and Ṣūfīs, as manifestations of divine favour. There is no doubt that solace, improvement in general health, and cure from disease, even material success in life, have resulted from association with personalities possessing transcendent spiritual powers; and this has led to belief in supernatural faculties for working wonders and miracles (*karāmāt*). The practice of many Hindu social customs (*bid'at*) is an Indian innovation not known in other Islamic countries. Pilgrimages to shrines of the saint, giving offerings and making vows, burning *chirāgh*, the oil-lamp with a wick, over the tomb of a saint, the partaking of sweets and food given as offerings on tombs and shrines of saints as sacred portions (*tabarruk*), are not indigenous to Islam, but a result of the influence of Hindu environment which has also resulted in veneration for the Muslim saint, gradually merging into such phrases as are hardly distinguishable from the saint worship

of Hinduism and the animistic phases of pagan primitive religious life.[1] Indeed, the Muslim masses of India attend the *Urs* or the annual commemoration prayers at the tomb of a saint dressed in their best and gayest attire with more enthusiasm and faith than in the observances of the cardinal principles of the faith of Islam. The ordinary Muslim *faqīr* of the village is a charlatan. The practice of pronouncing the remembrances (*dhikr*) in a very loud voice has been much abused; so also has the state of spiritual ecstasy (*ḥāl*) which immediately follows it: in these cases it is often a state of physical exhaustion brought about by the vociferous manner in which the prayers are shouted, and the violent actions which accompany them. The village *faqīr* may be a begging, singing mendicant, or one living on the credulity and generosity of the people, telling fortunes, writing charms, exorcizing evil spirits, performing miracles, and making capital out of the fact that anything given in the name of God or of some saint will repay the giver by great benefits, and a calamity will befall as a curse on those who refuse the request of a *faqīr*.

To return to the three lectures by Dr. Arberry: he has included some account of the three great Suhrawardīs of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries and has referred to the need for further research to be conducted into their writings and teachings. I would like to suggest that this subject might well engage the attention of a future lecturer on the Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy foundation.

Dr. Arberry also refers to the family motto, 'Poverty is my pride'. The story regarding this was related to me at Baghdad. The first of the three Suhrawardīs came under official displeasure for refusing to countenance certain actions. He was reduced to such straits that he carried water from the Tigris and sold it for a

[1] See the section on India in *Islam To-day* (Faber & Faber).

living, but continued his teachings in his free Madrassah and quoted the saying of the prophet *al-faqr fakhrī*—'Poverty is my pride'. The story relates that the water was found to have healing virtues and the learned Shaykh soon returned to opulence.

As regards my brother Abdullah's family, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad[1] writes that in the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* Sir Syed Ahmad Khan mentions that at a time when he was being assailed from all sides as a heretic on account of his rationalistic teachings, an unexpected voice in his support was raised by the head of the Madrassah at Dacca, Abdullah's father. These broad-minded intellectual attainments are an ancestral heritage; continuing, the Maulana says, 'it reflects credit on a family for a generation if it produces one brilliant person, but it is the distinction of the Suhrawardy family to have produced several talented men and women in one generation'. These have won wide esteem and exercised considerable influence on contemporary life.

In the third of Dr. Arberry's lectures it is pointed out that whereas once Suhraward was a flourishing town, the very trace of it has now vanished from the ken of man: only the names of its distinguished sons keep its memory green. From Suhraward the old Suhrawardī family migrated to Baghdad: from Baghdad a branch passed to India. Now, after these many centuries, the Calcutta family of Suhrawardy is gradually dying out.[2]

[1] Introduction to *Kaukab-i durrī* by Suhrawardiya Begum, Calcutta.

[2] My son Masood, a student of Aligarh Muslim University, died at the age of 16 in January 1928, and Shahab, the son of my nephew (Shaheed), an undergraduate of Christ Church, Oxford, died in London at the age of 18 in February 1940. They were the last male members of the family. The spelling Suhrawardy is of course conventional, and represents the same name as Suhrawardī; both spellings are commonly found, though the latter is more 'scientifically' correct.

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَيَبْقَى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو ٱلْجَلَالِ وَٱلْإِكْرَامِ

'All that is upon the earth must pass away; only the glory and majesty of thy Lord abide forever.' (*Qur'ān*, lv. 26–7.)

ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُهْتَدُونَ

'Such as who, when an affliction visiteth them, say, Verily we are God's and unto Him do we return: upon them are blessings and peace from their Lord, and they are the rightly guided.' (*Qur'ān*, ii. 152.)

بسکندر و سلیمان ببر ای صبا پیامی

بشماست ملك و دولت من و ملك بینوائی

'O breeze of morn, bear unto Alexander and Solomon a message: Ye possess (worldly) wealth and empire which are transitory, but mine is the (spiritual) realm of nothingness (which is everlasting).' ('Irāqī.)

HASSAN SUHRAWARDY

THE ATHENAEUM,
PALL MALL, LONDON, S.W. 1.
August 1942

PREFACE

A TWENTIETH-CENTURY world-war is not perhaps the best time in which to write a series of lectures introductory to the history of mysticism in Islam. Under the circumstances of total mobilization of the Empire's resources for total combat, the scholar finds himself pressed into service of a kind for which he never prepared himself: and if he is to continue his scholarly studies at all, then it can only be in the most fugitive manner, literally in moments of respite from wholly uncongenial but wholly necessary belligerency. He is further handicapped by the wise precautions which were taken betimes to rehouse the national treasures of oriental books and manuscripts in places where they might be more secure against the malice of the Empire's enemies, but at the same time remain inaccessible to the researcher. As against these material difficulties and handicaps, however, it is necessary to set one positive and incalculable advantage. Beset as we have been for some time now by pressing dangers, in this finest hour of the nation's and Empire's life, and having experienced the imminent threat of violence from the skies on many nights, it would be strange if our thoughts had not turned automatically to those matters of an eternal significance, the nature of life and man and his relation to God. Weighing these assets against those debits, it is not doubtful where the balance tilts.

I am all too conscious of the imperfections in these lectures, and plead the circumstances of their composition in extenuation. In other days I hope to be able to make good the faults apparent in the following pages, and in particular to prepare a complete bibliography of Ṣūfī studies and perhaps a catalogue of the original

sources, published and unpublished, necessary to the preparation of a definitive history of Ṣūfism.

In dedicating this book to my good friend and teacher, Professor R. A. Nicholson, I am fortunate in being able to quote from a letter in which he has defined for me his own views on the subject of these lectures:

'I should not now maintain that Greek philosophy is the only or even the pre-eminent source from which Ṣūfism was derived, though I still adhere to the view that the early development of Ṣūfism was very considerably influenced by infiltration of Hellenistic ideas, which however are but one of many diverse elements working within, and gradually transforming, the mystical movement in Islam. It seems to me that future research should concentrate, not so much on speculation concerning origins as on providing full scientific materials for studying the actual process of development: the marshalling of facts, and the establishment of their relations to each other, are—as you have admirably set forth in your third lecture—the only way of making at least a substantial advance towards the distant, indefinite, and perhaps ultimately undiscoverable goal. At any rate it is the beginning that counts.

In conclusion it is my happy duty to thank the electors to the Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy Lectureship at the University of Calcutta for the signal honour they have done me in inviting me to deliver these lectures. My only regret is that prevailing circumstances have prevented me from giving them in person.

A. J. A.

OXFORD
18 *July* 1942

LECTURE I

THE BEGINNINGS OF ṢŪFĪ STUDIES IN EUROPE

WHEN the invitation to deliver a course of lectures on Islamic Mysticism on the Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy Foundation reached me, in the spring of this present year, I accepted the honour with the keenest pleasure and alacrity for reasons which are, I feel, sufficiently important and germane to the general theme of this course as to warrant setting forth in some detail here and now. I will, therefore, venture to claim your attention and indulgence for a few moments while I speak of these matters, partly of a private nature, before enunciating the programme it is my intention to carry through and then proceeding to a completion of the first stage of that programme.

Though it was never my pleasure and privilege to meet the late Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy, I have of course always been familiar with the work he did, both in India and England, to revive the highest traditions of the Muslim life in his own conduct, and to secure for Islam and Islamic culture that recognition and respect which, after some centuries of misunderstanding, ignorance, and even hostility, are now general throughout the civilized world. In particular, his translations of the *Sayings of Muḥammad*, recently republished,[1] which had exercised so powerful an influence on the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, introduced not a few of my own countrymen to that inexhaustible store of spiritual and practical wisdom which has been the treasured and carefully transmitted heritage of generations of the Arabian Prophet's followers, and has now become the

[1] 'Wisdom of the East' Series (John Murray).

common inheritance of mankind. In the course of my own studies of Ṣūfī life and thought it has, of course, always been abundantly apparent to me that, without the twin foundations of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, the whole vast and beautiful structure of Islamic mysticism could neither have been erected nor preserved; and Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy's work on the Traditions of the Prophet is therefore a direct contribution to the study of the fundamentals of Ṣūfism.

Secondly, the very name of Suhrawardy cannot be heard or spoken by the student of mysticism without his being reminded of the profound influence exercised by three at least who bore that name on the doctrine and practice of *Taṣawwuf*. Of these three men I hope to say something later: for the moment I desire to place on record the gratitude and appreciation I feel for the personal friendship and inspiration of one who now bears that honoured name, Sir Hassan Suhrawardy,[1] brother of Sir Abdullah, whom it has been our honour and privilege to have in our midst in London during the dark and difficult days through which the world has recently been passing. If ever there was a time when the teachings of the great mystics were vitally necessary for the comfort of men's hearts and the lifting up of the spirit of humanity, that time is surely now. As I write these words, the same sombre shadow which has hung over my own country since the tragic events of the summer of 1940 is looming near to you, my distant audience; and I do not doubt that, as the people of England were sustained and fortified through the severe crisis of autumn and winter 1940, so the peoples of Bengal and of all India will find strength to endure and repel the evil threat. That strength and that resolution

[1] Adviser to the Secretary of State for India in London since June 1939.

are not of the things of the flesh, but of the spirit: nothing but a deep and mystical conviction that in the end righteousness and goodness must triumph can make tolerable the passing burden of anxiety, privation, and sorrow. 'For those who do good in this world there is good, and God's earth is broad: verily, those who endure with steadfastness shall be repaid, their reward shall not be measured.'[1]

So it is that I come to the third and last point of my personal explanation. The motto of the Suhrawardy house is, as you all know, the noble saying الفقر فخرى 'Poverty is my pride'. If there is one thing about the present war that can be predicted with complete certainty, it is that it is going to make us all much poorer. So vast an expenditure on supplying the material means of defence, to match the tremendous offensive armoury of the forces of darkness and to overcome them, necessarily entails a great impoverishment of the general material life of the community. In that sense, since material poverty is an inevitable price that must be paid for victory over evil, we may all rejoice and be proud to pay that price. But, of course, this saying has a far deeper meaning. The poverty which the Prophet made his pride was a poverty of the spirit, that poverty of which Junaid said that it was 'a sea of affliction, but of an affliction that is all glory',[2] and which Yaḥyā b. Muʿādh al-Rāzī defined as 'a preparedness to dispense with everything but God, its mark being the denial of all material means'.[3] The war has wakened the souls of many who had become intoxicated by the wine of too great material prosperity and fleshly ease, of conquered distances and harnessed nature, so that they

[1] *Qur.* xxxix. 13.

[2] al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma'* (ed. Nicholson), p. 221.

[3] *al-Risālat al-Qushairīyah* (Cairo, 1330), p. 123.

now begin to realize that all these things in which they always took their pride are worth nothing, and that the only element of permanence in this impermanent world is the force of the Spirit. So it may well be, and it is much to be hoped, that our present material poverty will be the occasion of such a poverty of the spirit, such a casting down of pride, such a yearning to lean only on God, that from the ashes of this vast conflagration will rise the phoenix of renewed faith, renewed hope, and renewed humanity.

I have called this series of lectures 'An Introduction to the History of Ṣūfism'; and this will be the appropriate place to explain what this title means, and why I have chosen it. A number of desultory attempts have already been made by various scholars to write a history of Ṣūfism, but it cannot be pretended that anything really satisfactory has yet materialized. The reason for this is not far to seek. I am going to lay it down now, as a fundamental principle, that no even partially complete account of the origins and development of Ṣūfī doctrine and practice can be written in our present stage of knowledge. It is unhappily the case that a very large volume, perhaps even the greater volume, of the primary and secondary materials indispensable to the scientific analysis of the Ṣūfī movement is still unpublished, being contained in manuscripts scattered over the libraries of Europe, Africa, and Asia. I shall be referring in some detail later to the brilliant contributions made by Professor Louis Massignon to the study of our subject: here I would invite your attention to the bibliography appended to his monumental monograph, *La Passion d'al-Ḥallaj* (Paris, 1922), for you will find that a very high proportion of the documents used in the course of that most fruitful research consists of unpublished manuscripts. From this it follows that

it is impossible for another scholar to form a complete and reliable independent judgement regarding the conclusions reached by the great French *savant*, unless he is prepared to make the same laborious and prolonged peregrination of libraries and to study afresh the same materials. Massignon's work is thus in reality a test case proving our point. Greatly as I admire the scholarship and industry of the man whose friendship I have been proud to claim for many years, I must own to an even deeper appreciation of the work of those other scholars, chief among them my own *murshid* Professor R. A. Nicholson, who have disciplined their ambitions to undertake what is perhaps a less spectacular but certainly a more generally serviceable task, the task namely of preparing sound editions and accurately annotated translations of the primary documents of Ṣūfism. For we orientalists in this generation are still in many respects in the position of the classical scholars of the Renaissance: it devolves upon us for our time to make the greatest possible provision for the requirements of our successors, furnishing them with the necessary tools wherewith they in their turn will proceed to construct the well-designed and balanced edifice. This observation applies with equal truth to all branches of Islamic studies, and with special force to the study of Ṣūfism.

When, therefore, I chose as a title for this course 'An Introduction to the History of Ṣūfism', I had it in mind to place before you what appear to me to be the necessary preliminaries, the completion of which must inevitably precede the writing of a complete history of Islamic mysticism. To some of my audience it may appear disappointing that my plan is not more ambitious than this: but I hope to have persuaded you, before the completion of this brief series of lectures, that more

profitable results can be looked for in a concentration on preparing the materials for our successors to work with, than in a well-meaning but premature attempt to dogmatize on the basis of insufficient evidence. My first lecture will consist of a review of the work of scholars prior to our times; in my second lecture I shall summarize the results of the researches conducted by our contemporaries; for my third lecture I shall reserve the task of summing up, assessing the total progress so far made, enumerating the special texts which have yet to be published or studied, and indicating the lines of individual inquiry which need to be pursued, and finally speculating on the form which the complete History of Ṣūfism will take, when it comes eventually to be written.

The first reference to the Ṣūfīs in English literature occurs, so far as I am able to trace, in T. Washington's translation of Nicholay's *Voyages*, published in 1585: and it may well be that Nicholay is the earliest European author in modern times to mention Ṣūfism. This does not mean, of course, that the writings and speculations of the Ṣūfīs were not known much earlier in the Christian West. The brilliant Spanish orientalist, Miguel Asín y Palacios, has assembled impressive evidence in his book *Islam and the Divine Comedy* to show that Dante was familiar with Muslim eschatology and was indebted for many details of his picture of the next world to the great Murcian theosophist Ibn 'Arabī. This is a single example of what was unquestionably a general process. It is impossible, for example, to read the poems of the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross without concluding that his entire process of thinking and imaginative apparatus owed much to those Muslim mystics who had also been natives of Spain. As for the Catalan Raymond Lull (d. 1314), it is beyond question

that his mystical writings are influenced by Ṣūfī speculations, for he was an accomplished Arabic scholar and founded a school of Oriental Languages at Rome.

'Concerning the problems of mystical psychology and speculation', writes Professor R. A. Nicholson[1], 'the West can still learn something from Islam. How much it actually learned of these matters during the Middle Ages, when Muslim philosophy and science radiating from their centre in Spain spread light through Christian Europe, we have yet to discover in detail, but the amount was certainly considerable. It would indeed be strange if no influence from this source reached men like Thomas Aquinas, Eckhart, and Dante; for mysticism was the common ground where medieval Christianity and Islam touched each other most nearly.'

Nor is this by any means all. While much research yet remains to be done before the whole matter can become clear, it is already established that the *futūwa* movement in Islam, with its close association with the Ṣūfī orders, influenced the development of the guilds in medieval Europe. These matters, however, while they properly come within the scope of research on Ṣūfism, only indirectly bear on our present subject, which is the systematic and scientific study of Islamic mysticism.

Reverting to our reference in Nicholay's *Voyages*, it is interesting to note that this author is already familiar with what is undoubtedly the correct etymology of the term Ṣūfī, for he writes, 'For that in the Arabian tongue wool is called Sophy, those which are of this sect are called Sophians'. We may also quote the Oxford scholar John Greaves, who writes in 1653, 'Those Turks which . . . would be accounted Sofees do commonly read as they walk along the streets',[2] adding a

[1] *The Legacy of Islam* (ed. T. W. Arnold and A. Guillaume), pp. 210–11.

[2] J. Greaves, *Seraglio*, p. 178.

orientalism was founded: its chief creator was the celebrated English scholar Sir William Jones. This is not the occasion for a detailed description of Jones's encyclopaedic accomplishments and universal knowledge, or of the importance of his pioneering work in many fields of Indology. Early in his career, while he was still at Oxford, he acquired a considerable proficiency in both Arabic and Persian, and learned to admire the lyrics of Ḥāfiẓ, of which he supplied a few delightful renderings. As soon as he came to Bengal he applied himself with characteristic energy and enthusiasm to the then little-known study of Sanskrit, and was impressed by the similarities between the Vedānta philosophy and the theosophy of the later Ṣūfīs. As it seems probable that Jones was the first European to comment on this fact, which had of course been well known to Dārā Shikōh in his day, it will be of interest to quote the passage from a Presidential Address to the Asiatic Society which was destined to found a school of theory that has not since failed to find followers.

'A figurative mode of expressing the fervour of devotion, or the ardent love of created spirits towards their Beneficent Creator, has prevailed from time immemorial in *Asia*; particularly among the *Persian* theists, both ancient *Húshangis* and modern *Súfis*, who seem to have borrowed it from the Indian philosophers of the *Védánta* school; and their doctrines are also believed to be the source of that sublime, but poetical, theology, which glows and sparkles in the writings of the old *Academicks*. "Plato travelled into *Italy* and *Egypt*", says Claude Fleury, to learn the "theology of the Pagans at its fountain head"; its true fountain, however, was neither in *Italy* nor in *Egypt*, (though considerable streams of it had been conducted thither by PYTHAGORAS and by the family of MISRA), but in *Persia* or *India*, which the founder of the *Italick* seat had visited with a similar design.'[1]

[1] *Asiatick Researches*, iii, pp. 165–83: 'On the Mystical Poetry of the Persians and Hindus'.

Thus Jones speculated, basing his theories on an acquaintance with the mysticism of the Persian poets only, or very nearly only: for he had no opportunity of studying those primary documents in Arabic which have still to be completely explored, and which afford the only reliable basis for constructing an ancestry of Ṣūfism. As we shall see, the view that Islamic mysticism was derived from or was in large measure indebted to the Vedānta philosophy has not lacked since for learned advocates, and it yet remains to be finally proved or rejected.

It so happened that it was a paper on the Afghan sect of the Raushanīya that next stimulated interest in Ṣūfism. This study, almost the last to be published by that great linguist John Leyden, whose premature death in 1811 robbed orientalism of one of its ablest exponents, though describing a set of doctrines which has only a derived relevance to our subject, influenced a number of contemporary scholars to take up the inquiry into mystical and semi-mystical sects.[1] It was in Afghanistan that Mountstuart Elphinstone acquired his very rudimentary knowledge of Ṣūfism: what he writes has an antiquarian value as illustrating the state of knowledge at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and it is therefore relevant to quote it at length.

'Another sect in Caubul is that of the Soofees, who ought, perhaps, to be considered as a class of philosophers, rather than of religionists. As far as I can understand their mysterious doctrine, their leading tenet seems to be, that the whole of the animated and inanimate creation is an illusion; and that nothing exists except the Supreme Being, which presents itself under an infinity of shapes to the soul of man, itself a portion of the divine essence. The contemplation of this doctrine raises the Soofees

[1] See *Asiatick Researches*, xi, pp. 363–428: 'On the Rosheniah sect, and its founder Báyezíd Ansárí'.

to the utmost pitch of enthusiasm. They admire God in every thing; and, by frequent meditation on his attributes, and by tracing him through all forms, they imagine that they attain to an ineffable love for the Deity and even to an entire union with his substance. As a necessary consequence of this theory, they consider the peculiar tenets of every religion as superfluities, and discard all rites and religious worship, regarding it as a matter of little importance in what manner the thoughts are turned to God, provided they rest at last in contemplation on his goodness and greatness.'[1]

In another passage Elphinstone explains his authority for what he writes on Ṣūfism:

'All that is known of it was communicated by a certain Dervise, who travelled into European countries, and who gave this account of his initiation in the mystery. He was directed to enter a particular building, and after passing through winding passages, and crossing several courts, he reached an apartment where eight persons were seated. They seemed all transported and disordered by their own reflections, and their countenances bore the marks of inspiration. The Dervise there learned unutterable things, and acquired more knowledge on the most sublime subjects from a moment's intercourse with those sages, than could have been gained by years of laborious study.'[2]

In the same year, 1815, as Elphinstone published these observations, there appeared the first edition of a most noteworthy book, Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*. This book contains the first long account, albeit a garbled account, of the principal doctrines of the Ṣūfīs; though one of Malcolm's two principal sources was a lecture delivered before the Bombay Literary Society on 30 December 1811 by James William Graham, linguist to the 1st Battalion of the 6th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry.[3] Though

[1] *Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, pp. 207–8.

[2] Ibid., pp. 208–9.

[3] J. Malcolm, *History of Persia* (1829 edition), ii, p. 270, fn. 1.

Graham's lecture was not printed until 1819,[1] it will nevertheless be appropriate to discuss it first, before passing to analyse what Malcolm himself wrote. Graham opened his account by referring to what had already been said on Ṣūfism. 'Although much has been said on the celebrated though little known subject of Sufiism by Sir William Jones the president of the Asiatic Society, and by the learned and ever-to-be-lamented Dr. Leyden that universal genius; yet there is an ample field for further discussion on this curious and important head.' Little did the ingenuous Bombay soldier realize how much discussion was to follow in the next century. As for his sources, these were sufficiently meagre;[2] and his whole account scarcely merits the high praise accorded by Sir John Malcolm.[3] Nevertheless, considering the disabilities under which Graham laboured, his effort is not to be despised. After quoting the usual etymologies offered for the term Ṣūfī, he well defines Ṣūfism as 'a total disengagement of the mind from all temporal concerns and worldly pursuits; an entire throwing off not only of every superstition, doubt, or the like, but of the practical mode of worship, ceremonies, &c. laid down in every religion'. He mentions the theory that the Ṣūfīs derived their doctrines and practices from the Yogis and Dnanis, and then

[1] *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay* (1819), pp. 89–119.

[2] 'Through my colloquial intercourse with natives of different classes, I have heard with some degree of pleasure many anecdotes of this wonderful order, though the greater part of them certainly bordering upon the marvellous': p. 89. On p. 97 Graham quotes 'a curious little treatise in Persian, entitled *Tūni wejood*': later he cites Kabīr in Urdu, and Abū 'Alī Qalandar and Shams-i Tabrīz (i.e., Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī) in Persian.

[3] 'There cannot be higher authority than this gentleman, who adds to great learning a singular knowledge of the opinions and usages of these remarkable oriental devotees': *History of Persia*, loc. cit.

proceeds to describe 'the Different States and Stages towards Perfection attainable by Man, as approaching Divinity': the *maqāmāt* he enumerates as consisting of Shĕryât, Tureequt, Hŭqeequt, and Mârifut, while his list of the *aḥwāl* embraces Nasoot, Melkoot, Jebroot, and Lahoot. He gives a curious list of the 'different Kinds of Ṣūfīs', whom he divides into 'Sālik, Mĕjĕzoob (i.e., Majdhūb) and Mĕjĕzoob Salik': the 'Sālik' group includes the names of Khājeh Nizamud-deen, Seyed Muntijub-ud-deen, Ameer Khosroo, Ameer Hussan, Khajeh Nusseer-ud-deen, Sheikh Fereed Shiker Gunj, and Sheikh Sâdi Shirazi, while the epithet 'Mĕjĕzoob' is given to Shems Tebreez, Munsoor Hulaj, Khajeh Hāfiz, Shah Sherif Boo Aly Qulunder, Sheikh Aboobeker Shible, Ainul Koozat Humdani, Sirmud, Shah Hussein Duddee, and Shah Peim.[1] In a daring concluding passage, before recounting some anecdotes of Ḥallāj and Shams-i-Tabrīz, Graham offers this interesting suggestion. 'The beloved, *Mahboob*, is the Son; Love itself, *Mohbut*, is the Holy Ghost; and he who loves all, *Mohib*, is evidently the Father. . . . I think there can be no stronger language in the mystery of the Trinity than this, and no stronger proof, especially from Mahomedan authority; though I am sorry to say they do not take it as such.'[2] Finally, even more greatly daring, he confronts some Ṣūfī sayings with passages from the New Testament, and seeks to establish the affinity between Ṣūfism and 'Christian Spiritualism'; adding a footnote to disarm the criticism such an analogy was bound in his generation to provoke.[3]

Time prevents me from entering into as full a dis-

[1] I quote Graham's spelling. [2] Op. cit., p. 109.

[3] 'He has not always employed that caution in language, of which his long residence in the East has prevented him from learning the usefulness': p. 119.

cussion of the curious account of Ṣūfism given by Malcolm in his *History of Persia* as I would wish; it may indeed be judged that I have already given too great attention to the imperfect accounts of the subject which we have been considering: my excuse must be first that it seemed desirable to draw a clear contrast between the meagre knowledge current among European scholars at the beginning of last century and the vast results now provided by subsequent research, and secondly that the foregoing papers have been largely forgotten and are not now generally available. My second point does not hold good of Malcolm, however, and it is therefore the less necessary for me to dwell at any length on his account. Malcolm derived his knowledge of Ṣūfism from two main sources: Captain Graham's lecture to the Bombay Literary Society, and a letter written by 'Aga Mahomed Ali, the late Mooshtahed, or high priest of Kermanshah', with whom he was well acquainted when he was in Persia in 1800.[1] He is also able to quote Shāhnawāz Khān, the author of *Ma'āṯhir al-umarā*, and the *Majālis al-mu'minīn* of Nūrallāh Shushtarī. Malcolm's catalogue of the various sects of the Ṣūfīs, and his statistics regarding the diffusion of Ṣūfism in Persia, are very curious; while I cannot refrain from quoting his general observations on the nature and origin of Islamic mysticism.

'The Persian Soofees, though they have borrowed much of their belief and many of their usages from India, have not adopted, as a means of attaining beatitude, the dreadful austerities common among the visionary devotees of the Hindoos. Practices so abhorrent to nature required for their support all the influences of ignorance and superstition over the human mind. The most celebrated Soofee teachers in Persia have been men as famed for their knowledge as their devotion.'[2]

[1] *History of Persia*, ii, p. 271, fn. 1.

[2] Ibid., p. 278.

In a concluding passage he writes:

'I have abstained from any description of the various extraordinary shapes which this mystical faith has taken in India . . . nor have I ventured to offer any remarks on the similarity between many usages and opinions of the Soofees and those of the Gnostics and other Christian sects, as well as some of the ancient Greek philosophers. The principal Soofee writers are familiar with the wisdom of Aristotle and Plato: their most celebrated works abound in quotations from the latter. It has often been assumed, that the knowledge and philosophy of Greece were borrowed from the east: if so, the debt has been repaid. An account of Pythagoras, if translated into Persian, would be read as that of a Soofee saint. His initiation into the mysteries of the Divine nature, his deep contemplation and abstraction, his miracles, his passionate love of music, his mode of teaching his disciples, the persecution he suffered, and the manner of his death, present us with a close parallel to what is related of many eminent Soofee teachers, and may lead to a supposition that there must be something similar in the state of knowledge and of society, where the same causes produce the same effects.'[1]

There is an extraordinarily modern ring about these words.

The interest in oriental studies provoked by the considerable achievements of British pioneers in India was not long in spreading to many parts of the European continent; and it was the turn of France and Germany to make the next contribution to the investigation of Ṣūfism. The mystical poetry of Persia had indeed already for some time been the vogue; its influence on the mind of so great a genius as Goethe is well known; and Hammer-Purgstall's creditable translations of the poets from 'Umar Khayyām to Jāmī introduced a large new public to a still unfamiliar subject. In France the illustrious Silvestre de Sacy included Ṣūfism within the

[1] Ibid., p. 300.

vast range of his interests: he published a noteworthy edition and translation of Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār's *Pandnāmeh* in 1819. It is thus not surprising that shortly after the appearance of Malcolm's *History of Persia* the first monograph devoted exclusively to Ṣūfism was published: this book, F. R. D. Tholuck's *Ssufismus sive Theologia Persica pantheistica*, though by modern standards trivial enough, marked in its day a very serious and substantial effort, and is of great antiquarian interest to the historian of Ṣūfī studies. As the volume is now extremely scarce and little studied, there seems sufficient justification for examining it with some attention. Tholuck aims, in four hundred pages of scholastic Latin, at convincing his readers of his wide researches and linguistic gifts, as was the fashion in those days, and for that matter still is; yet must be convicted of having definitely failed in his main purpose, and that because the material with which he chose to construct his thesis was wholly inadequate. Printed books were certainly lacking, but even at this time Germany was not destitute of important collections of oriental manuscripts; and while our author was reading in his native libraries and examining numerous unpublished texts, he might have made a better choice of bibliography than he did. For what is his reading-list? In Arabic, two books of al-Ghazālī, which he certainly did not study very profoundly; Ibn Khallikān and al-Qazwīnī; a history of Cairo by al-Suyūṭī, a book of Muslim sects by al-Isfarā'inī, and an anonymous treatise on Muslim theology. His Turkish sources consist of a translation of ʿAzīz Nasafī's *al-Maqṣad al-aqṣā*, later to be popularized by E. H. Palmer, and a work entitled *Miftāḥ al-abrār wa-miṣbāḥ al-anwār* which he ascribes to ʿAṭṭār. His main material is drawn from Persian, and here his list is more impressive though still very primitive, and

one forms the impression that he had by no means read through all the books he names—the first half of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's *Maṯnawī*, the *Gulšan-i rāz* of Šabistarī which E. H. Whinfield made his special care, Jāmī's *Subḥat al-abrār*, *Tuḥfat al-aḥrār*, and *Bahāristān*, 'Aṭṭār's *Jauhar al-ḏāt* and *Taḏkirat al-auliyā*, the first volume of Mīrḵwānd's *Rauḍat al-ṣafā*, and a 'Kitab Hussniye' by one Asad al-Dīn. A strange collection indeed for a writer on so vast a subject as Ṣūfism: yet Tholuck suffered from the handicap under which every pioneer labours—leaving the beaten track, he had none to guide him through the pathless jungle of abstruse thought that lay ahead.

After listing his sources the author discusses the origin of Ṣūfī doctrine. He opts in favour of the derivation of the term Ṣūfī from *ṣūf* (wool); then mentions that he formerly held the view that Ṣūfism was of Magian parentage.

'For considering the multitude of Magians that had remained especially in northern Persia, and apprehending that many of the most eminent Ṣūfī doctors were born in the northern province of Khorasan; having in mind also how the language had formerly passed from India to Persia, as well as how, amid the variety of opinions which even in the time of Agathias had divided Persia, some portion of Indian doctrine had also migrated thither: I came at one time to the view that Ṣūfism had been thought out in about the time of al-Ma'mūn by Magians in Khorasan surviving, imbued with Indian mysticism. This opinion gained further support from the fact that, as we often read, the founders of the sects were either descendants of Magian families or at least were well acquainted with Magians.'[1]

This theory, however, which has since attracted occasional support, he had now abandoned for lack of confirmatory evidence; and he had consequently reverted to the view that Ṣūfism sprang from the widespread Arab tendency to monasticism. Now Tholuck

[1] *Ssufismus*, pp. 42–3.

here so remarkably anticipates later opinions far more learned than his, that it will not be a waste of time to consider the argument he advances.

'In Mohammedanism the life of the coenobite scarcely accorded with military dominion, and therefore monasticism was not only disapproved of but roundly forbidden by Muḥammad, whence the Tradition so often on the lips of Mohammedans, "No monkery in Islam". Yet there are not lacking the clearest indications that not only Muḥammad himself but the entire Arab people were earnestly inclined towards the monastic life.... Feeling that his followers were so ardently desirous of the coenobite life, as not to be readily compelled and coerced to abandon it, he pronounced that "God Most Glorious had appointed the Pilgrimage to be the monasticism of Muḥammad's community".'[1]

From this tendency to asceticism Tholuck traces the development of the mystical outlook through the leading saintly personalities of early Islam: Ḥasan of Basra, Rābi'a, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī 'l-Khair (whom he assigns, following the erroneous lead of Langlès, to the beginning of the third century A.H.), Junaid, Bisṭāmī, and Ḥallāj: so he travels a path which has subsequently become sufficiently well worn, yet a path the true and accurate surveying of which yet remains the most important and difficult task for the future researcher. Of Bisṭāmī he says that by him, more openly than by any other Ṣūfī prior to his time, the doctrine of the divinity of man was enunciated, 'and many of his sayings and teachings savour of so solid a fanaticism that they might have led the less instructed either into Indian quietism or to that contempt for the law which characterized Carpocratic and Beguin'.[2] After dealing with the Ḥallājian doctrine of unity with God, Tholuck makes the observation that even this extreme development finds its origin in the Prophet's

[1] *Ssufismus*, p. 45.

[2] Op. cit., pp. 62–3.

own teaching, quoting the Tradition beloved of the Ṣūfīs, 'I have moments of familiarity (with God) when neither Cherubin nor Prophet can contain me'. Finally he claims to have firmly and solidly established that 'Ṣūfī doctrine was both generated and must be illustrated out of Muḥammad's own mysticism'.[1]

The rest of the book consists of an attempt to reconstruct the mystical theology of Ṣūfism on what we have seen to be inadequate foundations: the result is sufficiently unsatisfactory by modern standards, but was a considerable advance on anything that had been achieved hitherto. Tholuck does not fail, like a true child of his age, to trace the spread of Quietism through Asia from China and India, and its passage via Persia in pre-Islamic times into Greece and Alexandria where, taken up by the Neoplatonists and Gnostics, it filtered through pseudo-Dionysius into medieval Christianity. The allure of comparative mysticism is hard to resist, and few since Tholuck have succeeded in resisting it; yet let it be clearly understood that so far as the constructing of a history of Ṣūfism is concerned these attractive generalities make in reality very little solid matter; and personally I would recommend that a truce be called to all such speculations for at least a generation, so that meanwhile all possible energy can be concentrated upon the main task in hand, the only task appropriate to the thorough-going specialist, the description and analysis of Ṣūfī doctrine and practice on the basis of Islamic sources and Islamic sources only.

I have gone rather fully into these early writings on Ṣūfism for reasons already given, and do not propose in these lectures to attempt anything like an equally detailed examination of subsequent productions; the opportunity for this may present itself on another

[1] Op. cit., p. 71.

occasion; in the meantime I must be content to allow my foregoing remarks to serve as a model for a future complete survey. Materials for such a survey are all too copious, for the *silsilah*, so to speak, founded by Sir William Jones and transmitted by Graham, Malcolm, and Tholuck, has attracted a multitude of enthusiastic adherents and now has affiliations in all parts of the world and in almost every language. In what follows, both of this lecture and the two succeeding lectures, only the prominent landmarks are selected and the territory mapped out in reference to them.

The crying need, in the last century as now, was for printed texts: slowly enough that need is being satisfied, and only during the past forty years has real progress been made. The publication by A. Sprenger of ʿAbd al-Razzāq's *Dictionary of the Technical Terms of the Sufis* (Calcutta, 1845), and by W. Nassau Lees of Jāmī's *Nafaḥāt al-uns* (Calcutta, 1859), may be regarded in this respect as of epoch-making significance. Meanwhile, on the side of Persian mystical poetry really impressive work had already been done by 1850. The Bulaq presses were now beginning to produce that stream of Arabic texts which was eventually to become a flood: Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* was first printed, with a Turkish commentary, in 1252/1836 and his *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah* in 1269/1853, and soon the most important books of Ghazālī, Qushairī, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, and Shaʿrānī were available. Thus it was that by the time Alfred von Kremer wrote his *Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen des Islams* (Leipzig, 1868) he was able to draw on printed material of considerable volume; while the work of cataloguing the collections of Islamic manuscripts, scattered over the libraries of Europe, had made such progress that the researcher no longer had the sense of taking a leap into the dark when

he addressed himself to the task of examining unpublished resources. Chapters 5 to 10 of the first part of this important book of von Kremer are so instructive for the summary they present of the advance made in Ṣūfī studies since Tholuck, that I permit myself the liberty of describing their contents.

In chapter 5 (pp. 52–9) von Kremer draws a picture of Arabia in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times in which he emphasizes the widespread tendency to asceticism. 'The life of the monk and the ascetic, which had been evolved in the East some three centuries before Muḥammad and had spread in the most extraordinary fashion, did not fail to make a deep impression on the Arabs.'[1] Pre-Islamic poets, notably Imr al-Qais, delighted to describe the solitary monk's cell in the desert; Muḥammad's meeting with a Christian monk had an important influence on his spiritual development; his life and teachings exhibit unmistakable ascetic tendencies, as is indicated by the well-known Tradition, 'If ye knew what I know, ye would laugh little and weep much'. The next phase (chapter 6, pp. 59–69) is marked by the reaction of the god-fearing Muslims against the luxury and splendour in which worldly governors and rulers indulged, flushed with the sudden access of undreamed-of power. The Arabs, being desert-dwellers, were by nature highly nervous and susceptible; long vigils, and the constant meditation of the Word of God, produced a sense of religious exaltation. To the motives of fear and awe was presently added the sentiment of the love of God: this von Kremer ascribes to feminine influence, instancing the sayings of Rābi'a. Hemmed in on both sides by communities among which the life of the cloister had been practised for centuries, the Arabs

[1] Op. cit., p. 52.

could not help moving towards the monastic rule. 'It seems in fact that Ṣūfism absorbed into itself two different elements, the one an old Christian-ascetic, which had had a powerful influence already at the very beginning of Islam, and then later a Buddhist-contemplative that soon won the upper hand, thanks to the increasing influence of the Persians on Islam.'[1] Von Kremer traces these developments through Muḥāsibī —whom Sprenger had already studied in the *Calcutta Review*—Dhū 'l-Nūn, Bisṭāmī, and Junaid. The pantheistic character of Ṣūfī doctrine (chapter 7, pp. 69–78) became more and more pronounced by the end of the third century of the Hijra, especially under the influence of Ḥallāj. Von Kremer interprets the celebrated *ana 'l-ḥaqq* as pure apotheosis, and finds its origins ultimately in India, the media being the old Persian doctrine of the divinity of the king, and the extreme Shī'ite teaching regarding 'Alī and his house. Henceforward the foreign element of *murāqabah* (equated with the Vedic *dhyānā*) overshadows the original ascetic character of Ṣūfism. By the time of Ghazālī (chapter 8, pp. 79–89) it became possible to attempt a synthesis between orthodoxy and the mystical love of God and *dhikr*-induced ecstasy. As for Suhrawardī Maqtūl (chapter 9, pp. 89–100), his *ishrāqī* theosophy in which Neoplatonism and Zoroastrianism joined forces was so patently anti-Islamic in character that it was not surprising that orthodoxy rose against the heretic and put him to death. In analysing the doctrines of this great mystic von Kremer was able to use his *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* and *Hayākil al-nūr*, but was not familiar with those beautiful allegories in Persian which have in recent years engaged the attention of a number of scholars. Finally (chapter 10, pp. 100–11) Islam in

[1] Op. cit., p. 67.

general suffered a decline, and with it Ṣūfism; now the dervish orders commence their separate existence; and von Kremer ends his illuminating sketch with a description of Ibn ʿArabī and his system, based mainly on his *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah* and the writings of Shaʿrānī.

It is interesting to compare this, the first really scientific account of the development of Ṣūfism, with a little book published one year earlier at Cambridge, E. H. Palmer's *Oriental Mysticism*. Palmer had just graduated when this volume appeared, and it is therefore only natural that his judgement was still immature. It was indeed precocious to give so high-sounding a title to a translation of the inconsiderable little tract of ʿAzīz Nasafī which Tholuck had already utilized in a Turkish version: nevertheless, the digest of Ibn ʿArabī's system, which this treatise contains, still forms a useful introduction to Ṣūfism in general. It is incidentally interesting to read in Palmer's prefatory note, 'My present intention is merely to give an exposition of the system; its origin and history I reserve for a future work, in which I hope to prove that Sufiism is really the development of the Primaeval Religion of the Aryan race'.[1] This ambitious project was never realized, however; it may have formed one of the tasks Palmer intended for those later years that never came: for he was murdered in the prime of life by Bedouins of the Egyptian desert.

The same year, 1867, saw the appearance of an important though rather unscientific book which is still of great value and interest—sufficiently great to justify a new edition in 1927: this was John P. Brown's *The Darvishes*. Brown was at one time Secretary and Dragoman of the United States Legation in Constantinople, and he made good use of the opportunities afforded by his official appointment to investigate very thoroughly the

[1] *Oriental Mysticism*, p. xi.

many Ṣūfī orders which in his time exercised very great influence on Turkish life. His attitude to the problem of the nature and origins of Ṣūfism is typical of his period.

'That the Spiritual Principles of the Darvish Orders existed in Arabia previous to the time of the great and talented Islam Prophet cannot be doubted. . . . The spiritualism of the Darvishes differing in many respects from Islamism, and having its origin in the religious conceptions of India and Greece, perhaps the information I have been enabled to collect together on the subject may not be without interest to the reader. Much of this is original; and having been extracted from Oriental works, and from Turkish, Arabic, and Persian MSS., may be relied upon as strictly accurate. In procuring materials from original sources, valuable assistance has been rendered me by personal friends, members of various Darvish Orders in this capital, to whom I would here express my thanks. Notwithstanding the unfavourable opinion entertained by many—principally in the Christian world—against their religious principles, I must, in strict justice, add that I have found these persons liberal and intelligent, sincere, and most faithful friends.'[1]

Such being the noble sentiments entertained by the author, it is not surprising that the book itself gives a sympathetic and unbiased account of the various Ṣūfī orders investigated. As the public activities of these orders were brought to an end by the Kemalist régime in Turkey, and as no other book of equal scope exists that deals with practical Ṣūfism in that country, it goes without saying that Brown's study will remain a standard work of reference. It marks a great advance on the pages in E. W. Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, describing dervish life in Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century,[2] though from the strictly scientific standpoint it falls a good deal

[1] *The Darvishes*, 2nd edition, p. v.

[2] *Modern Egyptians*, 1st edition (London, 1836), pp. 310–17.

short of the level of subsequent publications, no doubt in large measure inspired by Brown's work.

To complete this survey of the development of Ṣūfī studies before the rise of the modern school of Goldziher, Nicholson, Macdonald, Massignon, and Asín Palacios, I may perhaps be permitted finally to quote the great Dutch scholar Dozy. Writing in 1879, he summarized the situation thus:

'Did mysticism really issue from the bosom of Islam, as has been claimed? There is good reason to doubt it, for the witnesses introduced into the debate are too recent to have authority. Moreover, they themselves consist for the most part of mystics, Ṣūfīs; and they always sought to trace the birth of their doctrine not only to the earliest period of Islam, by making Ṣūfīs for example of ʿAlī and Muḥammad, but even to the age of the Patriarchs, saying that Abraham himself was already a Ṣūfī. In short, the texts in question are to be found in books more distinguished for their poetical accounts of miracles than for their historical authenticity. It is much more natural to believe that mysticism came from Persia; it actually existed in that country before the Muslim conquest, thanks to influence from India; even before this period the idea of emanation and of the return of every thing to God had wide currency in Persia, and it was commonly said that the world has no objective and visible existence, that all that exists is God, and that, apart from God, nothing is.'[1]

These words fittingly sum up the degree of development attained since the first beginnings of D'Ohsson and De Gobineau, Jones and Tholuck and De Sacy. In a hundred years not a great deal that can be regarded as really substantial research had taken place. And the reason for this was, of course, first and last and always, the lack of published texts and of their scientific analysis.

Between von Kremer and Goldziher a great gulf is fixed, a gulf measured not so much in years as in available research material. To illustrate this point it will be

[1] R. Dozy, *Essai sur l'histoire de l'Islamisme* (Paris, 1879), p. 317.

sufficient to mention the names of some of the basic Ṣūfī texts which were printed for the first time during these intervening years. The *Qūt al-qulūb* of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) appeared at Cairo in 1310/1893; the *Risālah* of al-Qushairī in 1284/1867; al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā ʿulūm al-dīn* in 1289/1872, his *Bidāyat al-hidāyah* in 1287/1870, his *Kīmiyā-i saʿādah* (in Persian) at Lucknow in 1288/1871, and his autobiography, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*,[1] at Constantinople in 1293/1876; the *Kashf al-maḥjūb* of Hujwīrī was lithographed for the first time at Lahore in 1874; the *Tadhkirat al-awliyā* of Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār also at Lahore in 1306/1889, though an edition of this work had already appeared in India before 1857;[2] the *Futūḥ al-ghaib* of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī was lithographed with a Persian paraphrase at Lucknow in 1880, his *al-Ghunyah li-ṭālibī ṭarīq al-ḥaqq* was printed at Cairo in 1288/1871, and his *al-Fatḥ al-rabbānī* in 1281/1864. This list, which is by no means complete, will serve to indicate how important for the purposes of research was that enterprise which inspired publishers in various parts of the Muslim world to make available to the general public the fundamental text-books of Ṣūfism, thus setting an example which their successors will do well to emulate.

We have now completed the first part of our historical sketch of the development of Ṣūfī studies in the West. We have already travelled a long way from Jones and Malcolm to Brown and De Sacy; but the greater and more important part of the journey still remains ahead. This, therefore, will be a convenient point at which to break off: my next lecture will begin with the names of Goldziher and E. G. Browne.

[1] Translated for the first time into French by Barbier de Meynard in the *Journal Asiatique*, sér. vii, t. ix, pp. 1–93 (1877).

[2] See A. J. Arberry, *Catalogue of Persian Books in I.O. Library*, p. 506.

LECTURE II

THE SECOND PHASE: GOLDZIHER TO MASSIGNON

IN my last lecture I summarized the results of European research into the history and doctrines of Ṣūfism down to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. We saw in the course of our examination that while unquestionably much progress had been made since the pioneering work of Tholuck and his contemporaries, the conception of Ṣūfism current in the West was still far from accurate. In this second lecture I shall endeavour to cover the greater part of the researches prosecuted by scholars of the modern school.

A new chapter in the history of Islamic studies opened when a fifteen-year-old Eton boy, sympathizing with Sultan as against Czar, resolved to learn Turkish as a preliminary to enlisting in the Ottoman army. Edward Granville Browne did not fulfil this particular ambition, for the war which aroused his youthful enthusiasm ended before he could get into uniform; but his chance of visiting the Muslim East came in 1887 when Pembroke College, Cambridge, elected him to a Fellowship and sent him out to Persia. Browne's record of that adventure is among the world's great travel-books, but we mention it in the present context because it contains several interesting references to Ṣūfism. Browne's insight into the heart and core of Ṣūfī teaching has never been excelled, and almost all his books are permeated with a deep sympathy and understanding of the true nature of Islamic mysticism. In particular, his *Literary History of Persia*, that unsurpassable masterpiece of profound research and brilliant writing, contains by far the best and most complete

account yet given of the influence of Ṣūfī thought on Persian poetry. For our present purpose, however, we must content ourselves with only one quotation, taken from Browne's first book.

'The renunciation of self is the great lesson to be learned, and its first steps may be learned from a merely human love. But what is called love is often selfish; rarely absolutely unselfish. The test of unselfish love is this, that we should be ready and willing to sacrifice our own desires, happiness, even life itself, to render the beloved happy, even though we know that our sacrifice will never be understood or appreciated, and that we shall therefore not be rewarded for it by an increase of love or gratitude. Such is the true love which leads us up to God. We love our fellow-creatures because there is in them something of the Divine, some dim reflection of the True Beloved, reminding our souls of their origin, home, and destination. From the love of the reflection we pass to the love of the Light which casts it; and, loving the Light, we at length become one with It, losing the false self and gaining the True, therein attaining at length to happiness and rest, and becoming one with all that we have loved—the Essence of that which constitutes the beauty alike of a noble action, a beautiful thought, or a lovely face.'[1]

It would be well that only those should venture upon the high research into Ṣūfism who can write of its teachings with equal appreciation and sincerity.

In 1898 a book was issued by the Cambridge University Press which attracted much interest and approval at the time, and was destined to mark the beginning of a lifetime of work devoted to the elucidation and interpretation of Ṣūfī doctrine. This book was the *Selected Poems from the Díwán-i-Shams-i-Tabríz*: its author was R. A. Nicholson. We shall be dealing later at greater length with the dominating part Nicholson has played in prosecuting and stimulating research into Ṣūfism, and we mention this book now in order to place it in its

[1] E. G. Browne, *A Year among the Persians*, p. 140.

historical context. We have seen that Tholuck took the *Mathnawī-i ma'nawī* as one of his sources when writing the thesis *Ssufismus*: the same author devoted considerable space in a later book to a more detailed study of Rūmī.[1] He was, however, by no means the first European scholar to be attracted by the greatest mystical poet of Islam. Jaques de Wallenbourg (1763–1806), profiting of his diplomatic posting at the Golden Horn, spent six years in preparing an edition and annotated French translation of the entire *Mathnawī*, but had the great ill-luck to see his completed labours perish in the great fire which devastated Pera in 1799.[2] The first printed edition of the *Mathnawī* came from Bulaq in 1268/1853, but meanwhile Georg Rosen had translated into German verse about one-third of Book I.[3] Rückert (1819) and von Rosenzweig (1838), among others, made a particular study of the *Dīwān*, but all previous work on the lyrics was superseded by this book of Nicholson. The *Mathnawī* was familiar to the British public through the writings of Sir James Redhouse, the great Turkish scholar, and E. H. Whinfield: Redhouse translated the first book in 1881, while Whinfield produced, in 1887, an abridged version of the whole poem. Whinfield further assisted in the formation of the modern British school of Ṣūfī studies by editing and translating the *Gulshan-i rāz* of Shabistarī (1880): following in the footsteps of Baron Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, whose German version of this little poem had appeared in 1838, Whinfield prefaced to his text a general

[1] *Blüthensammlung aus der morgenländischen Mystik* (Berlin, 1825), pp. 53–191.

[2] See R. A. Nicholson, *The Mathnawí of Jalálu'ddín Rúmí*, vol. i, pp. 2–3.

[3] *Mesnewi oder Doppelverse des Scheich Mowlânâ Dschelâl-ed-dîn Rûmî*, Leipzig, 1849.

account of Ṣūfism. To this theme Nicholson returns in his *Selected Poems*, there enunciating in its earliest form his theory of Neoplatonist influence. He has subsequently written a number of important papers in discussion of the origins and early history of Ṣūfism, but of this more later.

The inspiration of John Brown's *The Darvishes* moved O. Depont and X. Coppolani to study the Ṣūfī orders of North Africa, though it is true that the learned authors of *Les Confréries religieuses musulmanes* also sought to serve a political purpose by writing their masterly book which appeared at Algiers in 1897: they argued that it was in French interests to win over the support of the dervish communities of French North Africa, but no doubt their contribution to learning far exceeded their service to politics. The first part of this work, which can well stand as a model for all subsequent researches of a similar character, sketches a general history of Arabia and the rise and development of Islam, leading into a discussion of the origins and evolution of Ṣūfism against the particular background of the Arab conquests of the Maghreb. The major portion of the book (pp. 193–571) describes minutely the organization of the Ṣūfī orders, especially in Algeria, and lists the principal fraternities with all their branches and affiliations. This production is a very great advance on Brown's rather unscientific work, and it would be well that any scholar planning to write a complete account of the Ṣūfī orders of India should thoroughly study the methods of Depont and Coppolani.

The distinguished Hungarian scholar Ignaz Goldziher brought Ṣūfism within the range of his general and learned studies of Islam, and two of his papers rank among the classical contributions to our subject. The first of these, 'Materialien zur Entwickelungsgeschichte

des Ṣûfismus', appeared in the *Vienna Oriental Journal* for 1899 (vol. xiii, pp. 35–56), and has been attentively studied by all subsequent researchers. In a slight modification of von Kremer's theory of the origins of Ṣūfism,[1] Goldziher isolates two distinct currents, taking his cue from Ibn Khaldūn: the first pure asceticism, closely cognate with the orthodox doctrine of Islam and ultimately traceable to Christian influence; the second a speculative theosophy derived on the one hand from Neoplatonism, and on the other from Buddhism.[2] The other important paper of Goldziher is his chapter 'Asketismus und Ṣūfismus' in *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (2nd edition, 1925, pp. 133–87): this is a more detailed statement of the same theory, but further cogent arguments are arrayed in a masterly fashion. Goldziher's insistence on a clear division between *zuhd* and *taṣawwuf* is his most important contribution to the whole study of Ṣūfism, and furnishes a clue which must be closely followed up when the history of mysticism in Islam comes to be written.

Before embarking on a discussion of the work of the three great masters of the modern school—Nicholson, Massignon, and Asín Palacios—it will be convenient if we pass in review a number of important books and papers by other scholars which have had a decisive influence on the development of Ṣūfī studies. It is noteworthy, in the first place, that a single volume of the *Journal Asiatique* (9ᵉ série, t. xix, 1902) contains articles by two distinguished French scholars which are highly relevant to our discussion. Carra de Vaux, the historian of Arab philosophy, contributes a very interesting and

[1] See above, p. 22.

[2] As far as I can trace, Goldziher was the first to utilize Kalābādhī, whose *Kitāb al-Ta'arruf* I have had the honour to publish and translate.

important paper on the Illuminative philosophy of Suhrawardī Maqtūl, taking up the story where von Kremer had left it off.

'The philosophy of Illumination is mainly Neoplatonism, but a Neoplatonism expressed by means of a special nomenclature based on the use of the metaphorical terms "Light"—"Darkness", symbolizing the metaphysical heights and depths, spirit and matter, good and evil. . . . It is worth noting that, according to oriental tradition, the dualism of Manes was mainly characterized by this opposition of Light and Darkness. As on the other hand the philosophy of *ishrāq* often refers to Zoroaster and the Persian sages, it may be inferred that this philosophy is a Neoplatonism clothed in a terminology whose flavour is Persian and perhaps more especially Manichean.'[1]

This main thesis is supported by copious extracts from the *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* and *Hayākil al-nūr*, and is finally summed up as follows: 'According to all appearances, it must be recognized that *ishrāq* had two ancestors whose features it reproduces, it is true, with an unequal fidelity—one Greek, the other Persian: Plotinus and Manes.'[2] After Carra de Vaux the great figure of Suhrawardī Maqtūl has continued to engage the attention of a number of scholars, and in recent years considerable headway has been made in the investigation of the development of his theosophical system, especially since the publication of some of his earlier treatises written in Persian. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that more than the fringe has been touched of a very vital and fascinating subject; in particular it yet remains for Suhrawardī's immediate sources to be worked out thoroughly; to this matter we shall be referring in our third lecture. In the same and the following volume of the *Journal Asiatique*, M. E. Blochet published his very suggestive 'Études sur l'ésotérisme musulman' which

[1] *Journal Asiatique* (1902), pp. 63–4. [2] Ibid., p. 94.

may still be read with profit. An interesting discussion of Ṣūfism occurs in the first volume of E. J. W. Gibb's monumental *History of Ottoman Poetry*, and the same work is a mine of information on the influence of mysticism on Turkish literature. The encyclopaedic range of D. S. Margoliouth's interests naturally included Ṣūfism, to which study he made several important contributions, among them a translation of the hostile *Talbīs Iblīs* of Ibn al-Jauzī: especially to be mentioned are his paper on the biography of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī,[1] and his note on Muḥāsibī which bridges the gap between Sprenger and Massignon and then Margaret Smith.[2]

Duncan Black Macdonald, uniquely qualified as a philosopher and follower of William James, devoted many years to the study of Ṣūfism, to which he assigns several chapters in his two important books, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory* (1903), and *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam* (1909). In the former work he supports the Neoplatonist parentage, but combines this with a special reference to the Christian ascetics and mystics. 'There is a striking resemblance between the Sufis seeking by patient introspection to see the actual light of God's presence in their hearts, and the Greek monks in Athos, sitting solitarily in their cells and seeing the divine light of Mount Tabor in contemplation of their navels.'[3] Macdonald suggests that the actual transmission of Neoplatonist ideas to the Ṣūfīs did not take place along the same channels as those by which they reached al-Fārābī. 'It was rather through the Christian mystics and, perhaps, especially through the Pseudo-Dionysius

[1] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1907), pp. 267 ff.

[2] *Third International Congress of Orientalists* (Oxford, 1908), i, pp. 292–3.

[3] *Development of Muslim Theology*, p. 178.

the Areopagite, and his asserted teacher, Stephen bar Sudaili with his Syriac "Book of Hierotheos".'[1] Professor Marsh's edition of this last-named book has now enabled us to examine this suggestion more closely; in the meantime A. J. Wensinck followed the same path in publishing the *Book of the Dove* and comparing its contents with the doctrines of Ṣūfism; while Margaret Smith has written a whole book with the intention of establishing a Christian ancestry for the Ṣūfīs.[2] But Macdonald looks eastward as well as westward and there finds the explanation of what he calls the 'pantheistic school' of Bisṭāmī and Ḥallāj.

'In the East, where God comes near to man, the conception of God in man is not difficult.... The half-understood pantheism which always lurks behind oriental fervors claims its due. From his wild whirling dance, the dervish, stung to cataleptic ecstasy by the throbbing of the drums and the lilting chant, sinks back into the unconsciousness of the divine oneness. . . . Here, we have not to do with calm philosophers rearing their systems in labored speculations, but with men, often untaught, seeking the salvation of their souls earnestly and with tears.'[3]

Macdonald further gives a useful analysis of the systems of al-Ghazālī and Ibn ʿArabī, and concludes his sketch of Ṣūfism with a description of the rise of the dervish fraternities. A more extended study of al-Ghazālī forms the concluding three chapters of *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, and constitutes perhaps the best general account of this supreme figure yet available in English. The book also contains the novelty of a lengthy description of Mullā Shāh, based on von Kremer's translation of Tawakkul Beg's biography.[4]

[1] *Development of Muslim Theology*, p. 181. F. S. Marsh's edition and translation of this text was published in 1927.

[2] *Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East*, London, 1931.

[3] *Development*, p. 182.

[4] Published in the *Journal Asiatique*, Feb. 1869.

Macdonald's attitude to the whole problem of Ṣūfism is summed up in a concluding quotation:

'From the earliest times there was an element in the Muslim church which was repelled equally by traditional teaching and intellectual reasoning. It felt that the essence of religion lay elsewhere; that the seat and organ of religion was in the heart. In process of time, all Islām became permeated with this conception, in different degrees and various forms. More widely than ever with Christianity, Islām became and is a mystical faith.'[1]

Lastly, in order to conclude this survey of the work of those scholars who may, without disrespect, be termed the minor authorities on Ṣūfism—for many of them have, of course, made other subjects their particular specialities—it will be convenient to say something of the publications of two German orientalists, each of whom has made a distinctive contribution to our studies. Richard Hartmann gave us in 1914 a useful summarized translation of the *Risālah* of al-Qushairī—I understand that a complete version of this most important text has been in preparation for some years in the United States—and this he followed up two years later with a painstaking paper on the origins of Ṣūfism.[2] Though this article naturally includes a good deal of material borrowed from earlier writers, it also contains some original thinking and is in general so comprehensive a survey of the position up to its date of compilation that it will be by no means superfluous to quote some of its author's findings. In a preliminary section Hartmann describes the four main theories, and then enlarges on Goldziher's distinction between *zāhid* and *ṣūfī*, pointing out that the latter is distinguished by his acceptance of the characteristic doctrines of *tauḥīd*—the mystical, not the Mu'tazilite *tauḥīd*—and *rūḥ*. In

[1] *Religious Attitude*, p. 159.
[2] *Der Islam*, vol. vi (1916), pp. 31–70.

an interesting analysis he seeks to establish that very many of the most famous figures in early Ṣūfism were non-Arabs,[1] and concludes: 'From this brief review of the most important Ṣūfīs of the first period it becomes clear beyond dispute that Ṣūfism flourished first and foremost in Khorasan; indeed, it seems that we must regard as its cradle the eastern legacy of Khorasan.'[2] Hartmann next shows that Turkestan before the coming of Islam, besides being the cockpit of Central Asia, was also the melting-pot of Eastern and Western religions and cultures, and argues that it is therefore not surprising that when the province accepted Islam it proceeded gradually to colour its new faith with some of the mystical hues inherited from the past: Indian mysticism and ascetic practices in particular returned once more to the picture. 'That developed Ṣūfism is inwardly permeated by Indian theosophy cannot in any way be doubted. The Muslims themselves felt this later.'[3] There remains the very important question, whether this Indian influence made itself felt also in the earliest stage of Ṣūfī development. Hartmann asserts that the doctrine of *riḍā* (Quietism) reflects a genuine Indian ideal; and goes on to instance as other pointers to Indian inspiration such phenomena as the begging-bowl, the use of the rosary, and the Gautama theme in the story of Ibrāhīm ibn Adham.[4] He even points to the name of Abū ʿAlī al-Sindī, Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī's teacher, as a clear and irrefutable proof of Indian origins. I do not know on what grounds Hartmann assumes that the *nisbah* Sindī refers to the province of Sind: it seems to me more natural to derive it in this

[1] For example, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, Shaqīq al-Balkhī, Dhū 'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, Yaḥyā ibn Muʿādh al-Rāzī.

[2] Op. cit., p. 44.

[3] Ibid., p. 48.

[4] Of course, all these parallels were pointed out long ago.

instance from Sind, a village in Khorasan not far from Abivard;[1] Bistam, Abū Yazīd's birthplace, was in the same province, and there is nothing more natural than that the native of the one place should study under a native of the other. However, the sum of the evidence, in Hartmann's view, is that Indian influence is proved even in the earliest period of Ṣūfism; and he further demonstrates that this contact would not be confined to Turkestan, but would take place all along the shores of the Persian Gulf. This is the main upshot of his discussion: for the rest, he is convinced that Ṣūfism was indebted both to 'Parsismus' (Mithras and Manes rather than Zoroaster) and, on the Western side, to Jewish kabbala, Christian monasticism and asceticism, the Gnostics, 'Enthusiasts', and Neoplatonists. To the question, who was responsible for welding all these heterogeneous elements together and reconciling them to Islamic orthodoxy, Hartmann replies that, more than to any other man, the credit belongs to Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Junaid; and he therefore pleads that all the existing fragments of this great mystic should be collected and thoroughly analysed, for they might well provide the concrete evidence to clinch these results of speculative reasoning. It may be added that since Hartmann wrote this paper a manuscript was discovered at Istanbul which contains a considerable number of the *Rasā'il* of al-Junaid: this, together with Abū Nu'aim al-Iṣfahānī's *Ḥilyat al-auliyā* recently published in Cairo, supplies far more ample material for this study than was previously known to exist, and I may perhaps be permitted to refer my hearers to two articles on this subject which I have published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.[2]

[1] See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, vol. v, p. 152.

[2] 'Junayd', *J.R.A.S.* (1935), pp. 499–507; 'The Book of the Cure of Souls', *J.R.A.S.* (1937), pp. 219–31.

No scholar has laboured more industriously or written more copiously to prove the Indian origins of Ṣūfism than Max Horten: though his methods of argumentation and the categorical nature of his conclusions have provoked considerable criticism, it is clear that a careful examination of his papers is an indispensable preliminary to the writing of a history of mysticism in Islam. It is not possible within the scope of the present lecture to attempt anything so ambitious as this, and we must confine ourselves to giving a description of two of his most important and characteristic articles, published in 1927 and 1928 in the *Materialien zur Kunde des Buddhismus*, under the general title 'Indische Strömungen in der islamischen Mystik'. The first of these papers is an attempt to establish in an analysis of the doctrines of Ḥallāj, Bisṭāmī, and Junaid that Ṣūfism was already thoroughly permeated with Indian thought in the third century A.H. The attempt is all the more remarkable in the case of Ḥallāj, in view of the fact that Massignon had already published his *magnum opus* in which he had been at particular pains to prove the contrary: when Horten writes, 'Ḥallāj is a Brahmanist thinker of the clearest water',[1] it is permissible to wonder whether he had really read what Massignon had written, or considered seriously Nicholson's argument that Ḥallāj was a monotheist and that pantheism did not really enter Ṣūfī thought until Ibn ʿArabī.[2] The second of these two papers is a lexicon of the most important Ṣūfī technical terms in use in Persia about the year A.D. 900. The intention of this article is again frankly polemical. 'From this lexicon there is established, purely objectively and in exact philological

[1] Op. cit., p. 5.

[2] R. A. Nicholson, *The Idea of Personality in Ṣúfism* (Cambridge, 1923), p. 27.

fashion, the identity of liberal Islamic mysticism with the theses of the Higher Vedānta.'[1] The paper is extremely technical in character, and for a non-German not made the more easy of understanding by the author's indulgence in much of the jargon of German philosophy.

It is now my pleasant but impossible task to summarize into a necessarily short space the grand contributions to Ṣūfī studies made by my own master, Reynold Nicholson, the man to whose industry and inspiration our debt is incalculable. We have already referred to his first work on Rūmī's lyrics, a volume adorned by examples of that rare felicity of creative translation which has characterized all his subsequent publications. I do not know of any rendering from the Persian, Fitz-Gerald's Omar included, which has moved me more than those profound yet lovely lines in which Nicholson interprets Rūmī's doctrine of the Unity of Being.

> Poor copies out of heaven's original,
> Pale earthly pictures mouldering to decay,
> What care although your beauties break and fall,
> When that which gave them life endures for aye?
>
> Oh, never vex thine heart with idle woes:
> All high discourse enchanting the rapt ear,
> All gilded landscapes and brave glistering shows
> Fade—perish, but it is not as we fear.
>
> Whilst far away the living fountains ply,
> Each petty brook goes brimful to the main.
> Since brook nor fountain can for ever die,
> Thy fears how foolish, thy lament how vain!
>
> What is this fountain, wouldst thou rightly know?
> The Soul whence issue all created things.
> Doubtless the rivers shall not cease to flow,
> Till silenced are the everlasting springs.

[1] Op. cit., p. iii.

The man who attained such perfection in the most difficult of all arts, the art of the translator, is nevertheless the same profoundly painstaking scholar who has produced a series of exact and scientific editions of some of the most important basic texts of Ṣūfism, crowning a lifetime of unremitting labours with his monumental work on Rūmī's *Maṯnawī*. Merely to mention the titles of some of his many publications is to indicate the vastness of their scope and importance: the *Kitāb al-Luma'* of al-Sarrāj, 'Aṭṭār's *Tadḏkirat al-auliyā*, Ibn 'Arabī's *Tarjumān al-aṧwāq*, the *Kaṧf al-maḥjūb* of Hujwīrī; to say nothing of his *Mystics of Islam*, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, *The Idea of Personality in Ṣúfism*, and many important papers and articles contributed to various learned journals and encyclopaedias. To illustrate the central motive which led up to this fruitful and invaluable work, it will be sufficient to quote the introduction to the edition (1914) of the *Kitāb al-Luma'*:

'This volume marks a further step in the tedious but indispensable task, on which I have long been engaged, of providing materials for a history of Ṣúfism, and more especially for the study of its development in the oldest period, beginning with the second and ending with the fourth century of Islam.... M. Louis Massignon, by his recent edition of the *Kitáb al-Ṭawásín* of Ḥalláj, has shown what valuable results might be expected from a critical examination of the early literature. It is certain that a series of such monographs would form the best possible foundation for a general survey, but in the meanwhile we have mainly to rely on more or less systematic and comprehensive treatises dealing with the lives, legends, and doctrines of the ancient Ṣúfís. I am preparing and hope, as soon as may be, to publish a work on this subject.'

Of the list of texts mentioned by Nicholson as forming the basis of such a work, it may be remarked that the three not published by 1914 have since been either completely printed or are in course of publication. But

it is also necessary to remark that so unrivalled an authority as Nicholson subsequently decided that the time was not yet ripe for a history of Ṣūfism to be written: his self-denying ordinance may well be followed by at any rate this and the next generation of scholars. It is obviously beyond the scope of the present lecture to attempt even the barest summary of the books whose titles I have mentioned, but before passing on to an analysis of the most important of Nicholson's papers—important, that is, from our immediate standpoint—I should like to call special attention to his volume of *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, for this book seems to me to be a model of its kind and an indication of what can be accomplished in specialized fields. It will be remembered that the work consists of three main chapters and two appendices: the subjects treated are the biography of Abū Saʿīd ibn Abī 'l-Khair, the doctrine of the Perfect Man as contained in Jīlī's *al-Insān al-kāmil*, and the mystical odes of the Egyptian poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ; there are also some valuable notes on the *Fuṣūs al-ḥikam* of Ibn ʿArabī. No more useful exercise can be recommended to the young researcher than to study the methods of this great master as illustrated in this book.

The article of Nicholson which we have reserved for detailed analysis is one which appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1906. In this paper the scholar stated those views on the nature and evolution of Ṣūfism which, though they have undergone modification since, nevertheless mark an historic stage in the progress of Ṣūfī studies.[1] Following Goldziher's isolation of the original ascetic element in Islam from the later speculative mysticism, Nicholson writes:

'The seeds of Ṣúfiism are to be found in the powerful and

[1] See above, p. xx.

widely-spread ascetic tendencies which arose within Islam during the first century A.H. As Goldziher has remarked, the chief factors in this early asceticism are (1) an exaggerated consciousness of sin, and (2) an overwhelming dread of divine retribution. . . . While recognising that Christian influence had some part in shaping the early development of Ṣúfiism, I am inclined to believe that Ṣúfiism of the ascetic and quietistic type, such as we find, e.g., in the sayings of Ibráhím b. Adham (†161 A.H.), Dá'úd al-Ṭá'í (†165 A.H.), Fuḍayl b. 'Iyáḍ (†187 A.H.), and Shaqíq of Balkh (†194 A.H.), owes comparatively little either to Christianity or to any foreign source. In other words, it seems to me that this type of mysticism was—or at least might have been—the native product of Islam itself, and that it was an almost necessary consequence of the Muḥammadan conception of Allah.'[1]

It was not until the third century A.H., in Nicholson's view, that non-Islamic influences began seriously to affect the character of Ṣūfism. The man he names as being chiefly responsible for this change is Dhū 'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī.

'An ascetic, philosopher, and theurgist, living in the ninth century among the Christian Copts, himself of Coptic or Nubian parentage—such was Dhu 'l-Nún al-Miṣrí, from whom, as his extant sayings bear witness, and as Jámí, moreover, expressly states, the Ṣúfí theosophy is mainly derived. The origin of this doctrine has often been discussed, and various theories are still current; a result which is not surprising, in as much as hardly anyone has hitherto taken due account of the historical and chronological factors in the problem. To ignore these factors, and to argue from general considerations alone, is, in my opinion, a perfectly futile proceeding, which can lead to no safe or solid conclusion. It is obvious that the principles of Ṣúfiism resemble those of the Vedanta, but the question whether Ṣúfiism is derived from the Vedanta cannot be settled except on historical grounds, i.e. (1) by an examination of the influence which was being exerted by Indian upon Muḥammadan thought at the time

[1] *J.R.A.S.* (1906), pp. 304–6.

when Ṣúfiism arose; and (2) by considering how far the ascertained facts relating to the evolution of Ṣúfiism accord with the hypothesis of its Indian origin. Similarly with regard to the alternative form of the "Aryan reaction" theory, namely, that Ṣúfiism is essentially a product of the Persian mind, it must be shown, in the first place, that the men who introduced the characteristic Ṣúfí doctrines were of Persian nationality. As we have seen, however—and I do not think my conclusions will be disputed by anyone who studies the evidence chronologically—this was by no means the case. Ma'rúf al-Karkhí came of Persian stock, but the characteristic theosophical mysticism of the Ṣúfís was first formulated by his successors, Abú Sulaymán al-Dárání and Dhu 'l-Nún al-Miṣrí, men who probably had not a drop of Persian blood in their veins. The remarkably close correspondence between Neo-Platonism and Ṣúfiism—a correspondence which is far more striking than that between Ṣúfiism and the Vedanta system—would not in itself justify us in deriving the one doctrine from the other. Nevertheless, I am convinced that they are historically connected, and I will now state some of the considerations which have led me to this belief.'[1]

Nicholson then proceeds to put forward his evidence for the widespread distribution of Neoplatonist ideas throughout the countries which came to accept Islam.

'It is not too much to say that the Moslems found Neo-Platonism in the air wherever they came in contact with Greek civilisation. Now the lands of Greek civilisation were pre-eminently Syria and Egypt, the very countries in which, as we have seen, the Ṣúfí theosophy was first developed. The man who bore the chief part in its development is described as a philosopher and an alchemist: in other words, he was a student of Greek wisdom. When it is added that the ideas which he enunciated are essentially the same as those which appear, for example, in the works of Dionysios, does not the whole argument point with overwhelming force to the conclusion that there is an historical connection between Neo-Platonism and Ṣúfiism? Is any other

[1] *J.R.A.S.* (1906), pp. 315–16.

theory of the origin of theosophical Ṣúfiism conceivable in view of the facts which I have stated? I am not prepared to go so far as Merx, who traces the Ṣúfí doctrine back to the writings of Dionysios,[1] but my researches have brought me to a result which is virtually the same: that Ṣúfiism on its theosophical side is mainly a product of Greek speculation.'[2]

I hope to have something to say in discussion of this passage in my next lecture: in the meantime let me conclude this very brief survey of Nicholson's theory of the origins and development of Ṣūfism by quoting his nine-point findings:

'(1) Ṣúfiism, in the sense of "mysticism" and "quietism", was a natural development of the ascetic tendencies which manifested themselves within Islam during the Umayyad period.

'(2) This asceticism was not independent of Christian influence, but on the whole it may be called a Muḥammadan product, and the Ṣúfiism which grew out of it is also essentially Muḥammadan.

'(3) Towards the end of the second century A.H. a new current of ideas began to flow into Ṣúfiism. These ideas, which are non-Islamic and theosophical in character, are discernible in the sayings of Ma'rúf al-Karkhí (†200 A.H.).

'(4) During the first half of the third century A.H. the new ideas were greatly developed and became the dominating element in Ṣúfiism.

'(5) The man who above all others gave to the Ṣúfí doctrine its permanent shape was Dhu 'l-Nún al-Miṣrí (†245 A.H.).

'(6) The historical environment in which the doctrine arose points clearly to Greek philosophy as the source from which it was derived.

'(7) Its origin must be sought in Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism.

[1] A. Merx, *Idee und Grundlinien einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Mystik* (Heidelberg, 1893), p. 320.

[2] *J.R.A.S.* (1906), pp. 318–19.

'(8) As the theosophical element in Ṣúfiism is Greek, so the extreme pantheistic ideas, which were first introduced by Abú Yazíd (Báyazíd) al-Biṣṭámí (†261 A.H.) are Persian or Indian. The doctrine of *fanâ* (self-annihilation) is probably derived from the Buddhistic Nirvana.[1]

'(9) During the latter part of the third century A.H. Ṣúfiism became an organised system, with teachers, pupils, and rules of discipline; and continual efforts were made to show that it was based on the Koran and the Traditions of the Prophet.'[2]

It is certainly no coincidence that the generation which produced so great a scholar of Sūfism as R. A. Nicholson should have raised up in France and Spain two men who have made greater contributions to this high research than any of their countrymen before. It is a commonly observed phenomenon in all the sciences that from time to time a most notable progress is made through the united efforts of a group of contemporaries, working not necessarily to a common plan, and often sundered by great distances; so it was that at the European Renaissance men in many countries suddenly discovered afresh the glorious heritage of ancient Greece; so it was that in Bengal at the end of the eighteenth century a group of Englishmen suddenly created the modern science of orientalism; so it is that in our own time, in physics and chemistry, in mathematics and medicine, researchers working independently, often unknown to one another, have each discovered a fragment of the mosaic that forms the pattern of human knowledge. It must be that there is a certain germinating virtue in human thought that strikes root in this mind and that, so that these minds, drawing upon a

[1] See again *The Mystics of Islam*, pp. 17–19, for a modified restatement of this view, and Carra de Vaux (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ii, p. 52), who derives *fanā* from Christianity.

[2] *J.R.A.S.* (1906), pp. 329–30.

common inspiration, so react upon each other in the interplay of ideas that all are the more stimulated to productiveness.

As we have seen, Nicholson's work began with the lyrics of Rūmī and, after ranging through the entire early history of Ṣūfism, he has now returned full circle to Rūmī's great *Maṯnawī*. Louis Massignon has concentrated all his Ṣūfī researches upon the single figure of Ḥallāj. While making excursions into the history and archaeology of Islam during extended visits to Iraq and Egypt, the French scholar was assembling materials for a complete study of the life, writings, and doctrine of the 'martyr mystic'. The first-fruits of this vast research were an edition of the *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn* with extracts from the Commentary of Rūzbihān al-Baqlī (Paris, 1913), and the publication of four texts illustrating the biography of Ḥallāj (Paris, 1914). Then came the First World War: it was not until 1922 that Massignon's great masterpiece, *La Passion d'al-Ḥallāj*, came from the press and revealed itself as a landmark in the progress of Ṣūfī studies. Time does not suffice for more than a very cursory survey of the wide territory covered by this great book which was fifteen years compiling. The most important lesson it teaches is this, that in our present stage of knowledge it is necessary that a whole series of monographs must be written on this model, each covering a single leading personality or significant school. Massignon has set a very high standard, and it will be for future researchers not to be satisfied until they have emulated him. The author's bibliography is a measure of the thoroughness with which he has done his work: it covers 74 pages, and includes every book, every paper, every manuscript that has a bearing on his subject. As for the thesis itself, it is printed in no fewer than 942 pages of closely

reasoned, fully documented text, a veritable Ṣūfī encyclopaedia. It would be a great service to the cause of Islamic research for this magnificent book to be translated into English, so that those students who are not entirely familiar with the French language—and philosophical French is full of pitfalls for the unwary—may not be denied access to what is undoubtedly the most important single work that has yet been published on Ṣūfism.

In the same year, 1922, another book of fundamental significance was published: Massignon's *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*. This work has an interesting history: the greater part of it was complete and in the hands of the printers at Louvain in August 1914, when the Germans invaded Belgium and in a typical display of native barbarism not excelled by the present Nazi generation sacked and burned that historic university town; the author was therefore under the necessity of writing the whole book afresh. This essay is in effect a history of the origins and development of Ṣūfism to the end of the third ninth century: it is based on the same wide reading, and exhibits the same brilliance of intuition and reasoning as the *Passion*. In some respects it is an even more significant book, for it discusses matters of a more fundamental character: it will therefore be necessary to discuss it now at greater length.

Massignon begins by establishing the importance of the study of the technical vocabulary of the Ṣūfīs, as an essential prelude to the correct elucidation of their doctrines. 'One cannot with impunity underrate the part played by the technical vocabulary in the development of dogma in Islam. It is thanks to its mysticism that Islam has become an international and universal religion.'[1] The author proceeds to postulate that this

[1] *Essai*, p. 5.

technical study must be conducted on a scientific basis, and proposes to examine the mystical vocabulary of Ḥallāj from this standpoint. After giving a list of the words making up this vocabulary, Massignon lays down the general principles for their examination and states his findings. First and foremost, it is the Qur'ān which furnishes the central basis of the Ṣūfī terminology. If it is objected that some of these terms occur only once in the Qur'ān, the answer is that 'these Coranic terms are *mutashābihāt*, "ambiguous" terms which arrest the reader and resist primary analysis; the process of *istinbāṭ* . . . leads to the mind hurling itself violently upon these terms in the course of each new reading'.[1] In the end, these perplexing phrases are absorbed against the general background of the text, and their meanings are crystallized in the mind of the reader. It is not to be excluded that, in this connexion, a certain number of foreign mystical ideas grafted themselves on to the body of Muslim thought. The second source of the Ṣūfī vocabulary is the general amalgam of purely Arab sciences—grammar, jurisprudence, traditions—all, of course, of the earliest period of Islam. Thirdly, there are the early Arab schools of theology. Fourthly, we must reckon with 'the scientific teaching of the time, presented in a kind of technical *lingua franca*, namely, Aramaic, which had been gradually built up during the first six centuries of the Christian era by the philosophic oriental syncretism, deriving its terms sometimes from Greek, sometimes from Persian'.[2] Such, Massignon argues, are the sources which influenced the early development of Ṣūfism: only by a painstaking examination of the authentic works of primitive Islamic mysticism can the important and often discussed question of the part played by foreign, non-Islamic influences be

[1] *Essai*, p. 29. [2] Ibid., p. 32.

زيارة مقبولة

Mosque and Shrine of 'Abd al-Qādir Muḥyī 'l-Dīn al-Jīlānī, Baghdad
Born Gilan 470 A.H. (1078). Died Baghdad 561 A.H. (1166)

finally answered. 'This philological method is the only one permitting the provision of serious proofs capable of securing the agreement of experts.'[1] More rigorous documentation of alleged 'borrowings' and 'imitations' must be provided than hitherto. It is not enough to state baldly that the Ṣūfī doctrine of *fanā* has been 'borrowed' from the *dhyānā* of Patañjali, and to leave it at that: before such a theory can be accepted, it is necessary to prove certain things, among them the vital point that actual exchange of ideas was possible and realizable at this period of history between India and Islam. Massignon applies these criteria to the other current theories of the origin of Ṣūfism: the theory of Iranian influence and the 'Aryan reaction'; the theory of Hebrew-Christian influence; the theory of the oriental syncretism made up of Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, and Manicheeism. In the end he states his general conclusions. 'It is from the Qur'ān, constantly recited, meditated, practised, that Islamic mysticism proceeds, in its origin and in its development. Based on the frequent re-reading and recitation whole of a text considered as sacred, Islamic mysticism derived therefrom its distinctive characteristics.'[2] From this everything else springs: even the curious phenomenon of *shaṭḥ*, in which the meditating mystic exchanges roles with the Divine Beloved, and appears to speak in the first person of such things as became a scandal to the orthodox. It is in terms of *shaṭḥ* that Massignon explains the currency among Ṣūfī writers of uncanonical traditions, and names a number of authors as responsible for putting into circulation for the first time certain of these *aḥādīth qudsīyah*: here, as elsewhere so often, he originates a discussion which may have the most important results when it is energetically pursued.

[1] *Essai*, p. 35. [2] Ibid., p. 84.

Having established these fundamental principles, which do indeed form the basis of all future research, Massignon concludes with a fairly detailed history of the development of Ṣūfism down to the end of the third century A.H. Almost all this most important section of the *Essai* is based on unpublished manuscripts studied by the author for the first time: the very fact that his sources are still not generally accessible makes it quite impossible for another student of Ṣūfism either to accept or reject his findings with any degree of finality. This, in my view, as I have already stated previously, constitutes a serious drawback; and for my part I should have been grateful if the great French scholar had published the passages on which he constructed his theories, as he has done in the case of Ḥallāj. But this would have been a truly herculean labour, and our debt to Massignon is already so great that it is impertinence to look for more: except that so rare is the excellence of his work, that we cannot well have too much of it. The *Recueil de textes inédits*, published in 1929, goes a little way, it is true, towards remedying this defect: but it is a tantalizing fragment, and falls far short of the purpose we have in mind. More recently Massignon has published the *Dīwān* of Ḥallāj, reconstructed from all the sources he consulted in the course of his research; while in 1936 he edited, in association with Paul Kraus, the *Akẖbār al-Ḥallāj* in further elucidation of the martyr mystic's biography. Thus, while it is never possible completely to exhaust any subject, particularly if that subject be connected with mysticism, it may certainly be said that after Massignon there remains little original work to be done on Ḥallāj, though no doubt discussion of points of detail and interpretation will continue for as long as scholars find the interest and opportunity to write on Ṣūfism.

Such, in sum, all too inadequately presented, is the roll of Louis Massignon's published work on Islamic mysticism, without taking account of numerous papers published in journals and encyclopaedias, as for example the important articles on *Ṭarīḳa* and *Taṣawwuf* in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. I feel sure, however, that this great scholar, with whom we have unfortunately lost contact since the Germans seized Paris, will not refuse me the pleasure of adding a few personal notes to complete this impersonal summary. In 1934 I had the opportunity of a long discussion with him in Cairo, and I then took up the question of his theory regarding the origin and early development of Ṣūfism. At that time I had been working over the Neoplatonist and Hermetic writers, as well as the early Christian mystics, as a background to my edition of Niffarī, and had come to certain conclusions which were to some extent at variance with those stated by Massignon in his *Essai*: briefly, I found myself in substantial agreement with Nicholson's views. I had been corresponding with the French master for some years, but this was the first time I had met him. I was not disappointed of my expectations of a gentle, saintly man with a lively wit and a most penetrating intellect who spoke English fluently and denied my inadequate attempts to converse in French. The most important point, in our present discussion, which emerged from this conversation was Massignon's confession that he had changed his mind in certain particulars; that he was not now so firmly convinced as formerly that Greek, and above all Christian, influences were not powerfully at work in the earliest period of Ṣūfism. Whether this view has since undergone any further modification I am not in a position to state, for reasons already indicated: nothing that may subsequently happen, however, can in any way detract from

the very great service Massignon has rendered to the cause of research by setting up new and strict standards for the regulation of future work, by calling attention to the overwhelmingly predominant part played by the meditation of the Qur'ān, and above all by enumerating and describing the considerable unpublished literature of Ṣūfism, including many important texts by the great masters themselves.

In my third lecture I shall say something of the work of the other great master of Ṣūfī research, Miguel Asín y Palacios; I shall then summarize the results of the labours of the younger generation of Ṣūfī students; and in conclusion I shall attempt to sketch out a programme of work which may exercise the attention of scholars during the next thirty years.

LECTURE III

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF ṢŪFĪ STUDIES

IN our last lecture we examined the development of Ṣūfī studies in Europe during the half-century beginning in 1880. We saw that the Neoplatonist theory had received powerful support from R. A. Nicholson; that the Indian theory had had an enthusiastic advocate in Max Horten; and that Louis Massignon had entered the lists in defence of what can perhaps be best described as the Islamic theory. There still remains one more theory to be considered, and with it the work of its principal exponent, the eminent Spanish orientalist Asín Palacios: this may be called the Christian theory.

Palacios has over the past forty years read widely and written voluminously on various aspects of Muslim philosophy and mysticism, but his name will be chiefly associated with the study of Ghazālī, Ibn Ḥazm, and Ibn ʿArabī. Already in 1901 he published his first large work on Ghazālī, *Algazel: Dogmática, Moral, Ascética*. This book consists mainly of an analysis of the first two volumes of the *Iḥyā*: the study of this greatest writing of Islam's most famous mystical theologian was completed in 1934–5, when Palacios's *Espiritualidad de Algazel y su sentido cristiano* was printed. This latter work, in two parts amounting altogether to above one thousand pages, is by any standard an impressive achievement, and constitutes by far the most important monograph on Ghazālī so far written. The author has worked with a very definite plan in mind, as he explains in the preface to his book. 'The principal object of my present study is to draw attention to the inheritance which the spiritualism of Ghazālī, and of Islam in

general, received from other non-Islamic sources, chiefly Christian, which have in my opinion been less explored and elaborated hitherto than they deserve.' This statement might indeed be taken as a text on which all Palacios's voluminous writings form an elaborate commentary. Whether we take his *Abenmasarra y su escuela* (1914), his *El místico murciano Abenarabi* (1926), his *El Islam cristianizado* (1931), or, above all, his *Logia et agrapha Domini Jesu apud moslemicos scriptores* (Paris, 1915, 1926), we find the same unifying theme; and all these books must be attentively studied by the future researcher in order to determine to what extent the author has succeeded in establishing his case. It is not my present intention, and, indeed, the scope of these lectures prohibits any such ambitious undertaking, to anticipate the results of such an examination, and I content myself on this occasion with taking as a specimen of Palacios's writings on this subject a paper contributed by him to the *Volume of Oriental Studies presented to E. G. Browne* (Cambridge, 1922).[1] This paper, inspired as its author declares by an article written by Goldziher thirty years previously under the title 'Influences chrétiennes dans la littérature religieuse de l'Islam',[2] consists of a series of forty-five passages from Muslim authors, including a number of well-known traditions, for which Palacios puts forward parallels in the Gospels and other books of the New Testament, with the implication that these parallels were their ultimate sources. Now it is entirely unobjectionable, as I see it, to suggest that the founder of Islam and his immediate followers may have been to some extent influenced by the teachings of the founder

[1] 'Influencias evangélicas en la literatura religiosa del Islam', pp. 8–27.

[2] *Revue d'histoire des religions*, t. xviii, pp. 180–99.

of Christianity: for the Qur'ān itself states clearly in a number of passages that the revelation vouchsafed to Muḥammad was a confirmation of what had been revealed to previous Prophets.[1] It would therefore be in the highest degree extraordinary if the teaching of Islam failed to coincide in many important particulars with Christian doctrine; and in point of actual fact there is a close similarity between the moral and ascetic codes of the two religions, though their theologies are of course profoundly different. Divine truth is one and indivisible, and on the highest of all spiritual planes there can be no clash of ideals. But this is one thing: to argue tendentiously, as I fear not a few non-Muslims have done, that all that in their view is good in Islam is of foreign origin, and must be traced to one or other non-Islamic source, is not so much honest scholarship as the worst form of sectarian bigotry. The altruism of an argument can best be tested by the scientific thoroughness with which its premisses have been constructed. Let us apply this test to Palacios's article now under review, taking three of his 'parallels' as specimens. He quotes from Ghazālī a saying of Abū Bakr, 'Let no one man despise another Muslim, for the least of the Muslims is accounted much by God'.[2] For this he puts forward two 'sources' in the Gospels: 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven',[3] and 'For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great'.[4] It had apparently escaped him that in the Qur'ān we read, 'Let not one people make mock of another people, who are haply better than they',[5] which is a much more likely source of Abū Bakr's saying. Secondly, he takes

[1] *Qur.* ii. 85, 91, iii. 2, 85, &c.
[2] Ghazālī, *Mukāshafat al-qulūb*, p. 104.
[3] Matt. xviii. 4. [4] Luke ix. 48. [5] *Qur.* xlix. 11.

the anonymous apophthegm, 'I desire to have in everything a purpose (*nīyah*), even in my eating, my drinking, and my sleeping'.[1] This Palacios matches up with the words of St. Paul, 'Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God'.[2] He has forgotten that the doctrine of purpose (*nīyah*) is a dominant theme in early Muslim theology,[3] and that a well-known tradition states that 'acts are only reckoned according to intentions'. As a third example let us take the story of Ḥasan of Basra. He was given a drink of cold water: when he took the cup, he fainted, and the cup fell from his hand. After he had recovered, he was asked what had happened to him. He replied, 'I recalled the hopes of the inmates of hell, when they say to the inmates of paradise, Pour out some water on us.'[4] Palacios quotes as the inspiration of this anecdote the passage from the story of Lazarus in which the rich man, being in hell, and seeing Lazarus afar off on Abraham's bosom, calls out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame'.[5] He has completely neglected the true source of this story, the actual passage in the Qur'ān from which Ḥasan of Basra was quoting.[6] On the basis of these examples, the merest fragment but perhaps a representative fragment of Palacios's methods of reasoning, it is impossible to feel a very secure faith in his judgement and the result of his researches. In saying this, it is by no means my wish to detract from the very high merit of this great scholar's contribution to Ṣūfī studies; but I feel it my duty to record my

[1] Ghazālī, *Iḥyā*, iv, p. 266.
[2] 1 Cor. x. 31.
[3] See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, iii, p. 930.
[4] Ghazālī, *Ayyuhā 'l-walad*, p. 13.
[5] Luke xvi. 24.
[6] *Qur.* vii. 48.

opinion that, in using his books, the researcher should make due allowance for the sectarian bias which has unfortunately to some extent affected the outlook of a brilliant and most industrious worker.

Before concluding this brief account of Palacios's writings, which have made it necessary for the Ṣūfī student to add Spanish to his linguistic repertory, we must not fail to mention his two most distinguished books. The first of these, *La escatología musulmana en la divina comedia* (1919), of which an English version has been published,[1] is as much an outstandingly original contribution to the study of Dante as it is to Muslim eschatology, and the discussion which its appearance provoked is a measure of its importance. In this work Palacios in a sense presents the reverse side of his favourite theory, for he shows the influence exercised on the greatest of Italy's poets by Muslim sources, and particularly Ibn ʿArabī. The second book, as its title implies, is a thorough-going exposition of the doctrine of Christian inspiration in Islamic mysticism. *El Islam cristianizado* sets out to prove, using as a special example the writings of Ibn ʿArabī, that the characteristic theosophy of Ṣūfism, as consummated in the teachings of the Murcian doctor, is fundamentally Christian in source and inspiration. It is a massive book, running into some 550 large pages, and it contains copious and long quotations from Ibn ʿArabī's best-known works, including *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, *Mawāqiʿ al-nujūm*, *al-Tadbīrāt al-ilāhīyah*, and the *Dīwān*, so that apart from everything else the volume constitutes a veritable anthology of Ibn ʿArabī. I cannot now discuss at length the wide scope and high importance of this impressive volume, which marks a new stage in the study of Ibn ʿArabī: it

[1] *Islam and the Divine Comedy.*

is certainly a work to be taken into account in all future research, and it would be a considerable service if its more original and significant passages were translated into English. If I describe it as perhaps the second most valuable book on Ibn ʿArabī written in modern times, thereby giving precedence to the work of the Egyptian scholar A. E. Affifi,[1] I am by no means unmindful of the debt it owes to Nyberg's *Kleinere Schriften*, an edition of three of Ibn ʿArabī's minor treatises with an excellent preface on his theosophical system. When all is said and done, however, it remains indisputably true that thorough research on this the greatest mystical genius of Islam is still in its infancy, and there are few subjects in the whole field of human studies more attractive to the student or more likely to yield important results. Ibn ʿArabī may be compared to an unexplored mountain peak: much of the territory on all sides is known, but it has yet to be determined by what precise paths the way to the summit lies, or in what remote heights those fountains spring that well into the mighty river of all subsequent mystical thought, Muslim and Christian alike.

Since Sir William Jones, England has never lacked for scholars interested in Ṣūfī research, and it can be claimed without undue presumption that there are now successors to the tradition of Palmer, Whinfield, and Browne who, if still serving their apprenticeship to this most skilled of trades, need not fear at all events to be compared with their contemporaries in other countries. But since it is an ungrateful and perhaps ungracious task to sit in judgement on the personalities of one's own generation, and as in any case it is not possible in this connexion to speak of fully matured work, it will

[1] A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid Dīn-ibnul ʿArabi*, Cambridge, 1939.

be best if we decline to enter into a detailed discussion of what has been and is being done by these scholars, in England and elsewhere: let us instead now pass immediately to what in my view is the most important of all the subjects dealt with in these lectures—the question of future research.

It will, I trust, have become clear from what we have already said that the time is past when books containing sweeping generalizations can serve any useful purpose. Generalizations are permissible only to the *wahre Meister* but it is to be feared that they are all too frequently the mark of immaturity and a superficial judgement. The *wahre Meister* of Ṣūfism has not yet been born: those of us who seek to explore one or another corner of this vast territory are bound to realize this fact, and it would ill become any of us to pretend to anything remotely approaching universal knowledge of our subject. We have a very definite task to perform: it is a task hard enough and in some ways rather uninviting, but it is the only way we can hope nowadays to build for the future. That task may consist of choosing, by mutual arrangement, one leading figure or school of Ṣūfism, and constructing, after the fashion of Massignon, the whole of our researches upon that foundation. In the second place, we may elect to emulate Nicholson by learning the difficult business of textual criticism, with all that it involves of minute attention to detail, and so qualifying to edit those extremely important Ṣūfī texts which still remain unpublished, and whose printing is indispensable if real progress is to be made by ourselves or our successors. Thirdly, we may choose to acquire an expert background knowledge of either Greek philosophy, particularly Neoplatonism and the popular eclectic schools of Alexandria and Byzantium, or early Christian mysticism including the Syriac writers, or

the mystery religions of Egypt and Persia, or Indian theosophy; in each case seeking to work out the facts and possibilities of actual historical contact with Islam: in this we should have in mind to assemble in an expert and impartial fashion the evidence on which the next generation of researchers may decide the real merits of the theories already put forward concerning the origins and development of Ṣūfism. Fourthly, we may perhaps prefer to study the influence of Ṣūfī thought on Islam in general, or on any of the other great religions: Palacios's book on Dante is an instance of what can be accomplished in this field.

Whichever course we may decide upon, it will be necessary for us to be equally well qualified in Arabic and Persian, and we may find it indispensable to acquire either Greek or Coptic or Syriac or Hebrew or Sanskrit or other languages in which our background material is written; on the Islamic side we shall not be able very well to dispense with Turkish and Pushto and Panjabi and Urdu; and in any case we shall find it difficult to do our subject full justice without a working knowledge of English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, to which Russian might well be added. It goes without saying that the most important of all preliminaries must be a very thorough knowledge of the Qur'ān, Traditions, and the important schools of Muslim theology. Unless we are prepared to undertake the very arduous mental discipline imposed by these conditions of our studies, we cannot hope to produce work that is likely to have a permanent value, and would be more profitably employed in some other study making less exacting demands. Stern and selfless discipline has ever been required of all aspirants to the mysteries of the Ṣūfī way, and it is but appropriate that we who may not be practising Ṣūfīs but rather theoretical investigators

should find our path no less beset by hardships. Finally, I may perhaps be permitted to say something on the psychological approach to Ṣūfī studies. Having regard to the nature of mysticism, which is surely at once the most profound and the sublimest of human activities, it will not be extravagant to require of those intending its study at least some natural inclination towards the higher metaphysic, some sincere understanding and sympathy for the upward strivings of the spirit, so that their researches may be undertaken not out of mere curiosity, even the curiosity of the scientist, but because, believing themselves that mystical knowledge is the goal of all science, they desire to apprehend how far the great initiates within Islam have penetrated to the essence of such knowledge, and thereby to increase their own inward comprehension of its mysteries. It follows as a natural consequence that they are not best qualified to study Ṣūfism whose attitude to religion in general, or to Islam in particular, is conditioned by hostility or bigotry; nor, in truth, if I may be allowed to make this point, will those Muslims be ideally fitted to take up this research who find themselves unable to appreciate the mysticism of other faiths than their own. In brief, the student of Ṣūfism ought himself to be something of a Ṣūfī.

Here, then, we stand, and let us assume for the sake of further argument that we are not conscious of any insuperable bar to the pursuit of our studies. What is the sum of the materials already at our disposal, what pioneering work still remains to be done, and along what lines can that work be most efficiently and economically planned? Obviously it is impossible in the short time still at my disposal to make anything approaching a comprehensive reply to these questions: I therefore propose to select one or two typical aspects of the broad landscape before us, and to illustrate through

these particular instances the kind of programme which may be recommended to future researchers.

First, let us take the most fundamental and fascinating problem of all, the question of the origins and early development of Ṣūfism. We have seen how far research has progressed up to the present: four rival theories still hold the field, theories which to a considerable degree are mutually contradictory. This is an intolerable situation, but fortunately it is not beyond remedy. I venture to suggest that the true reason why these rival theories can each command substantial support is because on the purely Islamic side the materials available for tracing the rise of the mystical movement have not yet been scientifically assembled and examined to any definitive extent, and because there is still too ready a disposition to accept with little demur the statements of comparatively late authorities. Arab writers even of the fourth century A.H. are already too deeply committed by their own theorizings to serve as infallible guides. Nothing else will serve our purpose but to publish the entire surviving writings of the earliest Ṣūfīs. Massignon has made a good beginning with Ḥallāj; Margaret Smith has now given us Muḥāsibī's *Ri'āyah*, Hellmuth Ritter has published the same author's *Bad' man anāba*, as well, by the way, as a somewhat lengthy essay of Ḥasan of Basra; Otto Spies has brought out the Bankipore fragment of Muḥāsibī's *Kitāb al-Ṣabr wa 'l-riḍā*; while his *Kitāb al-Tawahhum* has been edited by myself. I have also made available the *Kitāb al-Ṣidq* of Kharrāz, the works of Niffarī, two short essays of Junaid, and one treatise of Abū 'Abdallāh al-Tirmidhī. But all this is little more than a beginning. The new Brockelmann[1] indicates what a

[1] *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, I Suppl., pp. 349–58: cf. Massignon, *Essai*, pp. 154–7, 185–7, 213–15, 256–8, 273–4.

very substantial volume of writings of this, the earliest period of Ṣūfism, has survived in manuscript, and it is greatly to be desired that scientifically prepared and indexed editions of these texts should be published with the minimum of delay. What has already been published of Muḥāsibī has thrown the most interesting light on the sources and methods of Ghazālī;[1] the early compilers, like Qushairī, Kalābādhī, Sarrāj, and Sulamī, already acknowledged the great part Junaid played in the development of theoretical Ṣūfism, and it is tantalizing to know that his *Rasā'il* have still not been printed; to mention but one other example, my own preliminary examination of some of the writings of Abū 'Abdallāh al-Tirmidhī has suggested to my mind that this third-century Ṣūfī may have played a very important role in the evolution of the *ishrāqī* school. In the second rank of basic authorities we may now place Abū Nu'aim's *Ḥilyat al-auliyā*, available at last in a complete if rather unsatisfactory edition; this massive work is a veritable mine of information, and it is gratifying to reflect on the results which may be expected from a proper marshalling and working-out of the facts with which it furnishes us; the compiling of a scientific index would constitute a substantial aid to future students. To complete the Arab side of this picture, it remains to co-ordinate and compare all the information which can be gleaned from the later Ṣūfī texts, particularly Ghazālī's *Iḥyā* and Ibn 'Arabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*: when this and the rest of our task has been accomplished, and we are satisfied that all existing sources have been exhausted, only then shall we be able with confidence to essay a final account of the history, on the Islamic side, of the first three centuries of Ṣūfism. No less thorough and complete must be our examination of the

[1] See Margaret Smith, *An Early Mystic of Baghdad*, pp. 269–80.

non-Islamic sources which have been suggested as influencing the rise and growth of Ṣūfī thought. So far as Neoplatonism is concerned, it no longer suffices to quote isolated passages from the *Enneads* of Plotinus: it is by no means certain that Plotinus was ever translated into Arabic, and in any case it seems that if any Greek authors exercised a real direct influence on the Arab mystics, none of whom is known to have been personally acquainted with Greek, they are more likely to have been the late syncretists and epitomizers of Alexandria, Byzantium, and perhaps Harran and Jundeshapur, and it is this type of literature, neglected by Hellenists because from their point of view it has little value, which must be examined by the student of Ṣūfism. It is rather probable that these writings will have passed through Syriac before becoming accessible in Arabic, and in their Syriac form they must have been contaminated with Christian mysticism: hence it is necessary to sift very thoroughly the not inconsiderable late Syriac literature, especially the lives of the saints and the theoretical manuals of asceticism, in order to establish a reliable comparison with the sayings and writings of the early Ṣūfīs. My own extremely superficial survey of this literature has made it very difficult for me to resist the conclusion that there was a rather liberal interchange of ideas between the Christian and Muslim ascetics of the second century A.H., and I do not think that future research will overthrow the theory that Ṣūfism was influenced in its earliest period by Christian mysticism, and that all other Western influences—Neoplatonist, Neopythagorean, Hermetic, and Gnostic—impinged on early Islam through this medium. As for the alleged Eastern sources, among which I include Jewish mysticism, this is a question on which I cannot pretend to speak with any authority,

زيارة مقبولة

Mosque and Shrine of Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Hafṣ 'Umar al Suhrawardī, Baghdad
Born Suhraward 539 A.H. (1144). Died Baghdad 632 A.H. (1235)

but it is obvious that this matter must be investigated with equal thoroughness: my personal view, which is, I confess, based on very imperfect knowledge, is that it will be far more difficult to establish proof or probability on this head than on the other. However, the problem is still open for the freest discussion, and it is by no means an unattractive field of work. It is almost certainly chimerical to look for exact parallels, that is, to establish verbal correspondences proving or strongly suggesting that this particular Ṣūfī actually read that particular non-Islamic book: we have to deal with something far more subtle, something far less susceptible of satisfactory proof—the influence of the spoken word or practical example, which, though unrecorded in any known annals, may yet be confidently asserted by inductive and deductive reasoning on the basis of what is known and firmly established on both sides. It is well that we should be clear under what precise limitations we labour; though aeronautical research has made it possible for us to travel in the stratosphere, it is highly improbable that man will ever reach the moon; and we in our Ṣūfī studies must be content to exploit to the unsurpassable utmost the possibilities at our disposal. If certain proof cannot in the end be established, of what event or logical conclusion can absolute certainty be predicated?

There is a second subject which I would particularly commend to your attention as a theme for the most urgent treatment, and one which can only be investigated satisfactorily in India: this is the compiling of a complete history of Indian Ṣūfism, from its first origins down to the present day, with special attention to the multitude of orthodox and unorthodox dervish orders and their various branches and affiliations. In making this suggestion I am gratefully aware of the

considerable volume of work which has already been done, especially by M. T. Titus in his *Indian Islam*, and W. Ivanow in a number of papers; but here again it is a matter of only the fringe having been touched of a vast unexplored territory. The inquiry naturally falls into two main divisions, each of which can be subdivided into special sections providing material for many years' work. The first division is historical, and its material is naturally almost wholly confined to written records, scarcely any of which have been printed. There is not a major oriental library, whether in India or Europe, which does not contain a number of manuscript copies of the *Malfūẓāt* of this or that eminent Indian Ṣūfī, a series of biographies of the adherents of this or that *silsilah*. It would seem that there are few subjects on which so little has been written, in comparison with the wealth of sources available. Hand in hand with the purely literary work will go considerable archaeological research into the history of the shrines of the Muslim saints. Numerous outstanding personalities deserve separate treatment on the most generous and painstaking scale: for instance, Farīd al-Dīn Ganj-i Shakar, Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā, Naṣīr al-Dīn Chirāgh, Bahā al-Dīn Multānī, Aḥmad-i Yaḥyā Munyarī, and Muḥammad Gīsūdarāz. Naturally, also, each of the main Ṣūfī orders could be made the subject of a monograph. So much for the historical division and its branches. Secondly there is the study of the modern activities of Indian Ṣūfism. It may be—we cannot tell—that many highly interesting and significant movements having a long history are dying out before our eyes: it behoves us in any case to place on record now all that we can discover and observe of the Ṣūfism of the twentieth century, for our failure to do so will result in an irreparable loss to science. We have already

referred to Depont and Coppolani's book as a model for this kind of study; a recent work on the Bektashi order affords another excellent example;[1] by comparison with the research which has been prosecuted in other parts of the Muslim world, it must be admitted that India has not yet been adequately served, and this in spite of—or perhaps because of—the fact that the field in India is far broader and richer than elsewhere. It is to be hoped, therefore, that among your many excellent Islamic scholars now coming to the fore, some at any rate will be sufficiently attracted by this subject to rectify an unsatisfactory situation. In this connexion it may be added that by no means the least important personality in Ṣūfī history was the late Sir Muhammad Iqbal, whose significance R. A. Nicholson was among the first to recognize:[2] it is deplorable that this great Islamic figure, whose intellectual and spiritual gifts made of him one of the leading thinkers of our times, should still not have found biographers able to do him full justice. Iqbal belongs by right to the history of Ṣūfism, to which he made both scientific and practical contributions, and I therefore need make no apology for mentioning his name in this context.

In the third place, it would not be appropriate to conclude these lectures on the Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy foundation without making a more extended reference to the part played in Ṣūfī history by those who have borne the name of Suhrawardī. Suhraward, the birth-place of the three men whose careers we are now about to consider, is described by the earliest Persian geographer as a 'densely populated town' in the Jibāl

[1] J. K. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, Hartford (U.S.A.), 1937.

[2] Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, translated by R. A. Nichcison. London, 1920.

Province, 'much favoured by nature, and having a sociable population'.[1] So it was in the fourth century A.H.: but about the same time the town fell into the hands of the Kurds, and the inhabitants, who are described as heretics, for the most part migrated.[2] When the Mongols came, they destroyed Suhraward, and in Mustawfī's time nothing remained but a small village surrounded by Mongol settlements.[3] To-day it is not possible even to identify the site of the ancient town for certain. But if Suhraward itself has passed from the ken of man, its fame is perpetuated in the immortal names of its distinguished sons.

The senior Suhrawardī, Ḍiyā al-Dīn Abū 'l-Najīb ʿAbd al-Qāhir ibn ʿAbdallāh, a descendant of the caliph Abū Bakr, was born at Suhraward in 490/1097 and died at Baghdad in 562/1168. He came to Baghdad as a youth and studied *ḥadīth* under ʿAlī ibn Nabhān and *fiqh* under Asʿad al-Maihanī: later he professed at the Niẓāmīyah University. During this time Abū 'l-Najīb fell under the spell of Ṣūfism, and at his order a number of monasteries were built for his fellow-Ṣūfīs: his spiritual preceptors were Ḥammād al-Dabbās and Aḥmad al-Ghazālī; he is also said to have associated with ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.[4] In 557/1163 he set out for Jerusalem, but learned at Damascus, where he was received with honour by Maḥmūd ibn Zangī, that war had broken out again between the Arabs and the Crusaders, and he therefore had to return to Baghdad disappointed of his intention. As Rector of the Niẓā-

[1] *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam* (tr. V. Minorsky), p. 132.

[2] M. Plessner in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, iv, p. 506.

[3] *Nuzhat al-qulūb* (tr. Le Strange), p. 69.

[4] For a fuller account see Otto Spies, *Muʾnis al-ʾUshshāq*, pp. 1–4; C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, i. p. 436; *Suppl.* i, p. 780.

mīyah University Abū 'l-Najīb had naturally acquired considerable fame, while his conversion to Ṣūfism brought him still wider celebrity: nevertheless he wrote little, and the only book from his pen which achieved popularity is the small treatise *Ādāb al-murīdīn* which, though commonly found in manuscript, has not yet been printed.

Abū 'l-Najīb was the uncle of an even more celebrated nephew, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn 'Abdallāh, born at Suhraward in 539/1145. Like his uncle he came to Baghdad as a boy, and there studied under various teachers including Abū 'l-Najīb himself: he also associated with the great 'Abd al-Qādir. Shihāb al-Dīn spent most of his life in Baghdad where he enjoyed the favour of the caliph al-Nāṣir: he was appointed Shaikh al-shuyūkh, and received visitors and letters from all parts of the Muslim world. A good story is told of the practical wisdom which lay underneath his high spirituality. A Ṣūfī wrote to him: 'If I give up working, I find myself inclined to a life of idleness, whereas if I work, I am overcome by pride: which had I better do?' He replied briefly and to the point: 'Work, and ask God's forgiveness for your pride.'[1] Shihāb al-Dīn performed the pilgrimage on a number of occasions, and in 628/1231, while at Mecca, he met the great Egyptian poet and Ṣūfī 'Umar ibn al-Fāriḍ: in Baghdad he was visited by Sa'dī, who tells an anecdote about him in his *Būstān*,[2] and Bahā al-Dīn Zakarīyā al-Multānī, the well-known Indian saint and teacher of the poet 'Irāqī:[3] it was Bahā al-Dīn who brought the Suhrawardīyah discipline to India.[4] Shihāb

[1] Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, v, p. 154.
[2] K. H. Graf's edition (Vienna, 1850), p. 150.
[3] See my edition of 'Irāqī's *'Ushshāq-nāmeh*, pp. xv–xvi.
[4] Brockelmann, *G.A.L.*, *Suppl.* i, p. 789.

al-Dīn died at Baghdad in 632/1234. He was a more copious writer than his uncle, and his most celebrated work, *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*, has been both printed and studied: as the edition is now very scarce, however,[1] the book should certainly be re-edited. Carra de Vaux[2] and E. Blochet[3] have both analysed this work, while Maḥmūd ibn ʿAlī Kāshānī's Persian version was translated into English by H. Wilberforce Clarke.[4] Among the minor works ascribed to Shihāb al-Dīn is the *Irshād al-murīdīn*, a manual for beginners in Ṣūfism, which has been shown to be based on Qushairī's *Risālah*.[5]

Abū 'l-Najīb and Shihāb al-Dīn, stated to be joint founders of the Suhrawardī order[6] which rapidly spread to all parts of the world of Islam, for all the profundity of their mysticism kept within the bounds of orthodoxy and lived and died respected and honoured by all. Not so the third Suhrawardī. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū 'l-Futūḥ Aḥmad (or Yaḥyā) ibn Ḥabash (or Yaʿīsh) ibn Amīrak, called al-Maqtūl, born in 549/1155, studied *fiqh* and philosophy at Maragha under Majd al-Dīn al-Jīlī, the teacher of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.[7] Living the life of a wandering Ṣūfī, he came first to Isfahan, then to Baghdad, and finally to Aleppo, where to begin with Saladin's son and viceroy, al-Malik al-Ẓāhir, accorded him his patronage. In the intoxication of his mystical fervour, however, the young Ṣūfī committed indiscretions which

[1] It was printed on the margin of Ghazālī's *Iḥyā* at Cairo in 1289/1872.

[2] *Les Penseurs de l'Islam* (Paris, 1923), iv, pp. 199–207.

[3] *Études sur l'ésotérisme musulman*, see above, p. 32.

[4] In his translation of the *Dīwān* of Ḥāfiẓ, Calcutta, 1891.

[5] *Catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in the Library of the India Office*, ii, p. 115.

[6] L. Massignon in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, iv, p. 671.

[7] Ibn al-ʿImād, op. cit., iv, p. 290.

exposed him to the attacks of the more conservative-minded who denounced him to his royal master: Saladin himself intervened and issued an order for his execution as a heretic. Regarding the manner of his death a number of stories soon passed into circulation: according to some he shut himself up in his room on hearing that sentence had been passed against him, and refused food and drink until he died. This version, however, hardly explains how he came by the epithet al-Maqtūl, given him to make it clear that he was not a martyr:[1] possibly the tale was invented by his friends. Other authorities state that he was alternatively either strangled or crucified. At all events, it is certain that he died in 578/1191. Legends soon sprang up about his miraculous qualities: it is said that he was a profound alchemist, that he was never killed but disappeared, and that on the other hand no tree or shrub would grow on his grave.[2]

As we have seen, Suhrawardī Maqtūl has attracted the interest of a number of European orientalists, notably von Kremer, Carra de Vaux, and Horten: the Dutch scholar S. van den Bergh has also published an account of his system as contained in the *Hayākil al-nūr*.[3] More recently Massignon called attention to his profound importance, and urged that his surviving works should be edited with a view to a general study. In the meantime the patient industry of Ritter, who with his unrivalled knowledge of the libraries of Istanbul and ungrudging generosity has served his generation as well as any man could, unearthed copies of Suhrawardī Maqtūl's Persian works and so paved

[1] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, iv, p. 507.

[2] See O. Spies, *Mu'nis al-'Ushshāq*, p. 10.

[3] 'De Tempels van het Licht door Soehrawerdi' in *Tijdschrift v. Wijsbegeerte* (1916), x, pp. 30–59.

the way for the labours of Spies and Corbin. While, therefore, we still await good editions of his two fundamental Arabic texts, the *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* and *Hayākil al-nūr*, for his other minor writings we are gradually coming to a satisfactory position. Spies has edited the *Mu'nis al-'ushshāq* and, in association with S. K. Khatak, the *Lughat-i mūrān*, *Ṣafīr-i sīmurgh*, and *Risālat al-ṭair*, Corbin has published with Kraus the *Āvāz-i par-i Jibrīl*, and alone the *Kalimāt al-taṣawwuf*, while Mahdi Bayani, using an old manuscript in the National Library at Tehran, has brought out the *Risālah fī ḥālat al-ṭufūlīyah* and *Risālah-i rūzī bā jamā'at-i Ṣūfiyān*. A good deal of preparatory work yet remains to be done, before we shall be in a position to give a complete account of the development and, above all, the sources of Suhrawardī Maqtūl's *ishrāqī* theosophy: but already it is extremely satisfactory that the general public can now read some of his characteristic writings and pass judgement on his unique genius.

There is one more matter which we might profitably discuss, since it is closely germane to our general theme: this is the question of translating the Ṣūfī writers. It must in the first place be said that our labours as researchers into Islamic mysticism will be selfish and, in a larger sense, barren unless the fruits of our work can be enjoyed by a much wider circle than that which reads Arabic and Persian. Mysticism is not an isolated phenomenon confined to one school or one faith: on the contrary, it is the touchstone which resolves the ancient sectarian controversies and provides a common inspiration for a common humanity. The general public, quite unlearned either in Ṣūfī or any other form of mysticism, can find in the utterances of the Ṣūfīs, when suitably presented in a familiar idiom, great comfort and sure guidance in the perplexities of this

materialist age. It is clear that for this audience the more technical and recondite side of Ṣūfism can have little attraction: yet there remains a vast volume of fine sayings and inspired poetry which it is our duty to bring to the notice of our fellow men. There is a second use for translations. If our first and larger audience can be called the *ʿawāmm*, our second public is the *khawāṣṣ*: they consist of those students of other forms of mysticism—Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and the rest—who wish to extend their researches to take in a universal comparison, and being already familiar with the jargon of one school of theosophy they will not be frightened by the technicalities of another. For them we must prepare translations of those comprehensive treatises on Ṣūfism, such as Qushairī's *Risālah* and Kalābādhī's *Kitāb al-taʿarruf*, from which they will obtain a general picture of Islamic mysticism, as well as the more famous works of individual Ṣūfīs. Thirdly, we have to think of the *khawāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*, that is, the students of Ṣūfism themselves. The time has come when it becomes possible for a man to spend his entire life studying a single mystic, and in the course of that study he naturally acquires a far more profound knowledge of that individual figure than any other scholar can hope to attain. The writings of the Ṣūfīs are not easy to understand: it takes many years' concentrated attention to establish reasonable certainty of interpretation for such authors as, for example, Ḥallāj, Junaid, Ibn ʿArabī, Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Rūmī. When, therefore, we commit ourselves to a lifetime's seclusion communing with the spirit of this or that great Ṣūfī, let us remember to place on record all that we discover, even if it means producing almost unreadable material, so that the full fruits of our labours may not wither and die within our own minds.

These reflections came into my mind out of considering the translations Spies has made of Suhrawardī Maqtūl. Far be it from me to belittle the service to scholarship rendered by a contemporary with whom in the days before the modern Attila set out on his bloody career of world-desolation I enjoyed profitable correspondence. Yet it is difficult to conceive of anything more calculated to repel those who seek an indication of what this great mystic wrote that won him such fame, than the travesty of a version contained in the *Three Treatises on Mysticism*.[1] Few Germans ever succeed in mastering English completely, and Spies is certainly not one of those: I therefore find it incomprehensible that, over and above a very insecure understanding of Persian, he should have seen fit to torture the magnificent imagery of Suhrawardī Maqtūl into what is at times little more than gibberish. I quote Nicholson's judgement on this book.

'While the editors may claim full credit for their industry and enterprise in collecting all this new material, they cannot be congratulated on the way they have produced it. Even if we ignore obvious misprints, the short lists of corrigenda are very far from being complete. . . . Inaccuracy is a mild term for mistranslations such as "He vacated a house for me who am one of the broken-hearted" (p. 26). . . . In other respects too the English version leaves a good deal to be desired.'[2]

If I should appear to pillory this book in a manner its importance does not merit, it may be pleaded that this being the sole English version hitherto of any of Suhrawardī's allegories, it is altogether lamentable that the version is so wretched. We have been discussing the various uses of translations; these Persian works of Suhrawardī Maqtūl could be translated with profit for

[1] Published in 1935.

[2] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1937), pp. 716–17.

ʿawāmm and *khawāṣṣ* alike; the manner and method of Spies provide a perfect example of what to avoid.

Lest this criticism should appear not only sweeping but also entirely negative, I venture to make use of the time remaining at my disposal in order to submit a small anthology of translated extracts from the writings of this, the most unorthodox and most poetical of the Suhrawardīs. While the audacity of his imagery and the beauty of his language can certainly be matched in the sayings of many other Ṣūfīs, few have equalled Suhrawardī Maqtūl in his faculty of combining sublimity of thought with simplicity of allegory.

My first passage is taken from the *Lughat-i mūrān*, and it is from this anecdote that the treatise derives its name.

'A number of ants, fleet of foot, their loins girded, seeking to provide for their sustenance came forth from the shadowy depths of their original home and hiding-place and made their way to the wilderness. Now it so happened that a few shoots of vegetation came within the compass of their vision: in the time of the morning drops of dew settled upon their upper surfaces. Asked one ant of another, "What is this?" Some said, "The origin of these drops is from the earth"; others said, "It is from the sea." In this manner dispute arose in the place. A free-thinking[1] ant in the midst of them said: "Have patience a moment, so that (we may discover) in what direction its inclination lies: for every one has a tension towards his origin, a yearning to attach himself to his mine and source. All things are drawn by their own gravity. Do you not see that when a clod is thrown from (its) earth centre towards the sea-circumference,[2] since its origin is stony and the rule 'every thing returns to its origin' is established, the clod finally sinks to the bottom? Whatever ends in pure darkness, its origin is of the same: with regard to the light

[1] This appears to be the meaning of *mutaṣarrif*, rather than 'dextrous' (Spies–Khatak).

[2] A pun on the two meanings of *muḥīt*.

of divinity this proposition in the case of a noble element is even clearer. God forbid (that we should have) any thought (here) of Union (with God): (but) whatsoever seeks the light is itself of the light." The ants were in the midst of this, when the sun grew warm and the dew was about to rise from the vegetable body. Then it became clear to the ants that it was not of the earth: since it was of the air, it departed into the air.'[1]

I will choose as my second illustration the majestic passage towards the conclusion of the *Risālat al-ṭair* in which Suhrawardī Maqtūl, having described the flight of the birds towards the palace of the heavenly King, attempts to indicate the nature of the King Himself.

'Some of my friends asked me, (saying), "Tell (us) the quality of the King's majesty, and the description of His beauty and splendour". Though I am not able to achieve this, yet I will say something brief. Know, that whenever ye picture a beautiful thing in your thoughts, unadulterated with any ugliness, or a perfect thing that is hedged about by no imperfection, there ye will find Him. For all beauties are in reality His: now He is the loveliness of every (lovely) face, now the generosity of every (open) hand. Whoever does His service, the same finds eternal happiness; but he that turns away from Him has lost both this world and the next.'[2]

In the *Risālah fī ḥālat al-ṭufūlīyah* the author describes an encounter he had in childhood with a learned Ṣūfī, the questions he put to him and the answers he received. The following extract gives some idea of the style and contents of this very interesting treatise.

'I said to the shaikh, "When Ṣūfīs hold séance, they pass into a state (of ecstasy). How does this come about?" He replied: "Certain melodious instruments such as the drum, the flute and the like within the gamut of a musical mode give forth melodies wherein there is a certain plaintiveness. Then a vocalist also gives voice thereto in tones as sweet as can be, and in the midst of

[1] Spies–Khatak, *Three Treatises on Mysticism*, pp. 2–3 (text).
[2] Ibid., p. 45.

the melody speaks verses expressive of the feelings of one who has been entranced. When (the Ṣūfī) hears a tone so plaintive, plaintive, and in the heart of it perceives the image of his own entrancement, then, like Hindustan to the mind of the elephant,[1] so the soul's state is brought to the mind of the soul. Thereupon the soul takes that mystic fervour out of the ear's possession, saying, Thou are not worthy to hear this. The soul banishes the ear from hearing, and itself hears: but the soul's hearing is in the other world, for in that world hearing is not the business of the ear." I said to the shaikh, "What is the explanation of dancing?" He replied: "The soul strives upward, as a bird that longs to cast itself forth from its cage. The body's cage intervenes: the bird of the soul uses force, and provokes the body out of its place. If the bird has great strength, it breaks the cage and goes forth: but if it has not that strength, it becomes giddy and spins the body round with itself.[2] Even in that pass the true meaning of triumph becomes apparent: the soul's bird (still) strives upward, desiring that, if it cannot escape from the cage, it may transport the cage itself upward. However much it strives, more than a little it cannot carry upward: the bird carries the cage upward, then the cage falls to the ground." '[3]

My last extract is taken from the *Mu'nis al-'ushshāq* and is remarkable as an example of mystical exegesis.

'Love is a house-born slave that has been nurtured in the city of pre-eternity. The Monarch of pre- and post-eternity has appointed him to watch over the two worlds: every moment he is engaged in watching some region, and all the while he is casting his glance upon some clime. In his letters of credence it is written, that upon whatever city he turns his face, the lord of that city must sacrifice a cow for him, for "God commands you to slay a cow".[4] Until he kills the cow of the carnal soul, he will not set foot within that city. The body of man is like a city: his limbs are the streets thereof, his veins the rivulets that

[1] Cf. 'Irāqī, *'Ushshāq-nāmeh*, v. 742.
[2] Apparently explaining the so-called Mevlevi dancing.
[3] *Dū risālah-i fārsī* (ed. M. Bayani), pp. 11–12.
[4] *Qur.* ii. 63.

are let run through the streets, his senses are the tradesmen, each occupied with (his own) business, his carnal soul is a cow that makes devastation in that city. It has two horns,[1] whereof the one is concupiscence, the other ambition: it is of a fair hue, golden, and it is lustrous, glittering; all that look upon it rejoice, "Golden, her colour is very bright, she delights the beholders".'[2]

We have now completed the task upon which we embarked; we have traced the rise and progress of Ṣūfī studies from the end of the eighteenth century to the present day; we have indicated along what lines future research should best proceed; and it only now remains to describe the form which that complete history of Ṣūfism will take when it comes to be written, which will incorporate the results of all these vast researches and digest them in a manner agreeable to both the student of comparative mysticism and the Ṣūfī specialist. It will, I think, have become apparent that this history will be no small book: indeed, it must have something of the nature of an encyclopaedia. Like an encyclopaedia, it will need to be compiled by a number of experts, each specializing in a particular aspect of the subject: but it will also require an editor whose difficult responsibility it will be to give the whole work balance, and to resolve such inconsistencies as are bound to arise from the conflict of expert views. But since 'the conflict of the learned is a mercy', as the Prophet himself sagely observed, it should not be impossible finally to achieve this goal, though for my part I do not anticipate that it will be reached much sooner than the year in which our successors will be celebrating the bicentenary of the publication of Tholuck's *Ssufismus*. If the world has to wait another eighty years before the whole story of Ṣūfism can be finally and completely

[1] Reading *sarūn*.

[2] *Qur*. ii. 64: *Mu'nis al-'ushshāq* (ed. Spies), pp. 45–7.

told, perhaps it is not too much to hope that the generation which will produce it will be a generation of men and women released from the fear of war and want, a generation that has returned to the true understanding of spiritual values and to the application of mystical truths to everyday life.

INDEX

ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī, xii, xiv, 26, 33, 68.
ʿAbd al-Razzāq, 20.
Abraham, 56.
Abū ʿAbd Allāh Chishtī, xi.
Abū Bakr, 55.
Abū 'l-Faḍl, vii.
Abū Nuʿaim Iṣfahānī, 37, 63.
Abū Saʿīd b. Abī 'l-Khair, 18, 41.
Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, 11.
Affifi, A. E., 58.
Afghanistan, Ṣūfism in, 11.
Aḥmad Fārūqī Sirhindī, Shaykh, xiii.
Ā'īn-i Akbarī, vii.
Akhbār al-Ḥallāj, 50.
Algeria, Ṣūfism in, 30.
Aramaic, 48.
Arnold, T. W., iii, x, xiii.
Aryan hypothesis, 23, 43.
Asceticism, 21, 31, 41, 44.
Asín y Palacios, M., 6, 25, 52–7.
Athos, monks of, 33.
ʿAṭṭār, Farīd al-Dīn, 16, 17, 26, 40.
Āvāz-i par-i Jibrīl, 72.
ʿAwārif al-maʿārif, 70.

Bābā Fakhr al-Dīn, x.
Bad' man anāba, 62.
Bahā al-Dīn Naqshband, Khwājah, xiii.
Bahā al-Dīn Zakarīya, Multānī, viii, 66, 69.
Bahāristān, 17.
Bakhtiyār Kākī, Quṭb al-Dīn, Khwājah, xiv.
Baqlī, Rūzbihān, 46.
Bayani, Mahdi, 72.
Bidāyat al-hidāyah, 26.
Bisṭāmī, 18, 22, 34, 36, 38, 45.
Blochet, E., 32, 70.
Book of the Dove, 34.
Brown, J. P., 23–6, 30.
Browne, E. G., iv, 26–7.
Buddhism and Ṣūfism, 31, 36, 38, 44.

Chishtī order, vii, xi.
Christianity and Ṣūfism, 13, 31, 33–4, 37, 42, 44, 51, 53, 64.
Clarke, H. W., 70.
Confréries religieuses, les 30.
Coppolani, X., 30, 67.
Corbin, H., 72.

Dante, 6, 57.
Dārā Shikōh, 9.
Darvishes, 23.
Depont, O., 30, 67.
Development of Muslim Theology, 33.
dhikr, xvi, 22.
Dhū 'l-Nūn Miṣrī, 22, 42–4.
dhyānā, 22, 49.
Dictionary of technical terms, 20.
Dionysius, pseudo-, 19, 33, 43–4.
Dīwān al-Ḥallāj, 50.
Dīwān Ibn ʿArabī, 57.
Dozy, R., 25.

Egypt, Ṣūfism in, 24.
Elphinstone, M., 10–11.
Enneads, 64.
Espiritualidad de Algazel, 53.
Essai sur les origines, 47.

fanā, 45, 49.
Fārābī, 33.
al-Fatḥ al-rabbānī, 26.
Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam, 20, 41, 57.
Futūḥ al-ghaib, 26.
al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah, 20, 23, 57, 63.
futūwa movement, 7.

Gentius, G., 8.
Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen, 20.
Ghazālī, Aḥmad, 68.
Ghazālī, Muḥammad, 16, 20, 22, 26, 34, 53, 55, 63.
al-Ghunyah, 26.
Gibb, E. J. W., 33.
Gīsūdarāz, Muḥammad, Sayyid, xi, 66.
Gnostics, 19, 37, 44, 49.
Goethe, 15.
Goldziher, I., 25–6, 30–1, 35, 41–2, 54.
Graham, J. W., 11–14.
Greaves, J., 7.
Gulistān, 8.
Gulshan-i rāz, 17, 29.

Ḥadīth, xiv, 2, 60.
Ḥadīth qudsī, 49.
Ḥāfiẓ, 9.
Ḥallāj, 18, 22, 34, 38, 40, 46, 48, 50, 73.
Hammer-Purgstall, J. von, 15, 29.
Hartmann, R., 35–7.
Ḥasan Baṣrī, 18, 56, 62.
Ḥasan Niẓāmī, Khwājah, viii, xi.
Ḥayākil al-nūr, 22, 32, 71–2.
Hermetic writers, 51.
Hierotheos, 34.
Ḥikmat al-ishrāq, 22, 32, 72.
Ḥilyat al-auliyā, 37, 63.
Hindu environment, vii, xiv–xvi.
History of Ottoman Poetry, 33.
History of Persia, 11, 14.
Horten, M., 38, 71.
Hujwīrī, 26, 40.

Ibn ʿArabī, 6, 20, 23, 34, 38, 40–1, 53, 57–8, 63, 73.
Ibn al-Fāriḍ, 41, 69, 73.
Ibn al-Jauzī, 33.
Ibn Khaldūn, 31.
Ibn Khallikān, 16.
Ibrāhīm b. Adham, 18, 42.
Idea of Personality in Ṣūfism, 40.
Iḥyā ʿulūm al-dīn, 26, 53.
Imr al-Qais, 21.
India, Ṣūfism in, viii–xvi, 65–7.
al-Insān al-kāmil, 41.
Iqbal, Muhammad, 67.
ʿIrāqī, viii, xviii, 69.
Isfarā'inī, 16.
ishrāqī theosophy, 22, 32, 63, 72.
Islam and the Divine Comedy, 57.
Ivanow, W., 66.

Jādū Jalāl al-Dīn, *see* Jatmall.
Jalāl al-Dīn Surkh-pōsh, Sayyid, ix.
Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī, ix.
Jāmī, 17, 20, 42.
Jatmall, called Jādū Jalāl al-Dīn, x.
Jauhar al-dhāt, 17.
Jīlī, 41.
Jones, W., 9, 10, 25–6.
Junaid, 3, 18, 22, 37–8, 62, 73.

Kabīr, Jalāl b. Aḥmad, called Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān, ix.
Kabīr al-Dīn, son of ʿIrāqī, viii.
Kalābādhī, 31, 63, 73.

Kalimāt al-taṣawwuf, 72.
Kashf al-maḥjūb, 26, 40.
Kaukab-i durrī, xvii.
Khāndān-i Suhrawardīyah, vi, x.
Kharrāz, 62.
Khatak, S. K., 72.
Kīmiyā-i sa'ādah, 26.
Kitāb al-Luma', 3, 40.
Kitāb al-Ri'āyah, 62.
Kitāb al-Ṣabr, 62.
Kitāb al-Ṣidq, 62.
Kitāb al-Ta'arruf, 31.
Kitāb al-Tawahhum, 62.
Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn, 40, 46.
Kremer, A. von, 20–2, 25, 31, 34, 71.

Lane, E. H., 24.
Lazarus, 56.
Lees, W. N., 20.
Leyden, J., 10.
Literary History of Persia, 27.
Lughat-i mūrān, 72, 75.
Lull, Raymond, 6.

Ma'āthir al-umarā, 14.
MacDonald, D. B., 25, 33–4.
Magians, 17.
Mahābir Khāndāyat, Pīr, xi.
Majālis al-mu'minīn, 14.
Majd al-Dīn Jīlī, 70.
Makhdūm-i Jahāniyān, *see* Kabīr.
Makkī, Abū Ṭālib, 20, 26.
Malcolm, J., 11–12, 14, 26.
Manicheeism, 37, 49.
al-Maqṣad al-aqṣā, 16.
Margoliouth, D. S., 33.
Ma'rūf Karkhī, 43–4.
Massignon, L., 4, 25, 33, 40, 46–52, 59, 62.
Mathnawī-i ma'nawī, 17, 29, 40.
Mawāqi' al-nujūm, 57.
Merx, A., 44.
Miftāḥ al-abrār, 16.
Mirkhwānd, 17.
Mithras, 37.
Monasticism, 17–18.
Muḥammad, the Prophet, xv, 19, 21.
Muḥammad Bāqī billāh Berang, Khwājah, xiii.
Muḥammad Ghawth, Bandagī, Sayyid, Shāh, xii.
Muḥammad Shāh 'Ālam, ix.
Muḥāsibī, 22, 33, 62–3.
Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī, xi, xiv.
Mullā Shāh, 34.
Mu'nis al-'ushshāq, 72, 77.
al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl, 26.
murāqabah, 22.
Mystics of Islam, 40.

Nafaḥāt al-uns, 20.
Naqshbandī order, vii, xii.
Neoplatonism, 19, 22, 30–3, 43–4, 49, 51, 64.
Nicholay, 6, 7.
Nicholson, R. A., iv, xx, 5, 7, 25, 28–30, 38–46, 59, 67, 73.
Niffarī, 51, 62.
nirvana, 45.
Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā, xi, 66.
Nūrallāh Shushtarī, 14.

Orientai Mysticism, 23.

Palacios, *see* Asín y Palacios.
Palmer, E. H., 16, 23.
Pand-nāmeh, 16.
Pantheism, 22.
la Passion d'al-Ḥallaj, 4, 46–7.
Patañjali, 49.
Plotinus, 64.
Poverty, spiritual, 3.

Qādirī order, vii, xii.
Qazwīnī, 16.
Qur'ān, xiv, xviii, 2, 49, 52, 55, 60.
Qushairī, 20, 26, 35, 63, 73.
Qūt al-qulūb, 26.

Rābi'a, 18, 21.
Rauḍat al-ṣafā, 17.
Raushanīyah, 10.
Recueil de textes inédits, 50.
Redhouse, J., 29.
Religious Attitude and Life, 33–4.
Risālah fī ḥālat al-ṭufūlīyah, 72, 76.
Risālah-i rūzī, 72.
al-Risālat al-Qushairīyah, 3, 26, 35.
Risālat al-ṭair, 72, 76.
Ritter, H., 62, 71.
Rosen, G., 29.
Rosenzweig, H. von, 29.
Rückert, F., 29.
rūḥ, 35.
Rūmī, Jalāl al-Dīn, 17, 29, 39, 40, 46, 73.

Sa'dī, 8, 69.
Ṣafavīs, 8.
Ṣafī al-Dīn, 8.
Ṣafīr-i Sīmurgh, 72.
St. John of the Cross, 6.
Saint-worship, xv.
Sālim Chishtī, Shaykh, xii.
Sarrāj, 3, 40, 63.
Sayings of Muhammad, vi, 1.
Seraglio, 7.
Shabistarī, 17, 29.
Shāhnawāz Khān, 14.
Shams-i Tabrīz, 13, 28.
Sha'rānī, 20, 23.
shaṭḥ, 49.
Shī'a, 22.
Silvestre de Sacy, 15, 25–6.
Sind, viii, 36.
Sindhī, Abū 'Alī, 36.
Smith, Margaret, 33–4, 62–3.
Sophy, Grand, 8.
Spies, O., 72–5.
Sprenger, A., 20, 22, 33.
Ssufismus, 16–19, 29, 78.
Stephen bar Sudaili, 34.
Storey, C. A., iii.
Studies in Islamic Mysticism, 40–1.
Subḥat al-abrār, 17.
Suhraward, 67–8.
Suhrawardī order, vi–ix, xiv.
Suhrawardī, Ḍiyā al-Dīn, 68–9.
Suhrawardī, Shihāb al-Dīn, viii, ix, xvii, 69, 70.
Suhrawardī Maqtūl, 22, 32, 70–1, 73–7.
Suhrawardy, Calcutta family, xvii, 3.
Suhrawardy, Abdullah, iii–vi, 1, 2.
Suhrawardy, Hassan, 2.
Sulamī, 63.
Suyūṭī, 16.
Syed Ahmad Khan, xvii.

Tabor, Mt., 33.
al-Tadbīrāt al-ilāhīyah, 57.
Tadhkirat al-auliyā, 17, 26, 40.
Tahdhīb al-akhlāq, xvii.
Talbīs Iblīs, 33.
Tarjumān al-ashwāq, 40.
taṣawwuf, 31.
tauḥīd, 35.
Tawakkul Beg, 34.
Tholuck, F. R. D., 16–19, 23, 25, 27, 29, 78.
Three Treatises on Mysticism, 74.

Tirmidhī, 62–3.
Titus, M. T., 66.
Tolstoy, L., 1.
Translation, uses of, 72–3.
Tuḥfat al-ahrār, 17.
Turkey, Ṣūfism in, 24, 33.

van den Bergh, S., 71.
Vaux, Carra de, 31, 45, 70–1.
Vedānta, 9, 10, 22, 39, 42.

Wallenbourg, J. de, 29.
Washington, T., 6.
Wensinck, A. J., 34.
Whinfield, E. H., 17, 29.

Yaḥyā b. Muʿādh Rāzī, 3.
Year Among the Persians, A, 2

Zoroastrianism, 22, 32, 37.
zuhd, 31.

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